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THE WORLD'S GREAT SERMONS

COMPILED BY
GRENVILLE KLEISER

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The World's Great Sermons

VOLUME III

MASSILLON TO MASON

THE WORLD'S GREAT SERMONS

COMPILED BY

GRENVILLE KLEISER

Formerly of Yale Divinity School Faculty;
Author of "How to Speak in Public," Etc.

With Assistance from Many of the Foremost Living Preachers and Other Theologians

INTRODUCTION BY

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IN TEN VOLUMES

VOLUME III—MASSILLON TO MASON

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MASSILLON

THE SMALL NUMBER OF THE ELECT

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Jean Baptiste Massillon was born in 1663, at Hyères, in Provence, France. He first attracted notice as a pulpit orator by his funeral sermons as the Archbishop of Vienne, which led to his preferment from his class of theology at Meaux to the presidency of the Seminary of Magloire at Paris. His conferences at Paris showed remarkable spiritual insight and knowledge of the human heart. He was a favorite preacher of Louis XIV and Louis XV, and after being appointed bishop of Clermont in 1719 he was also nominated to the French Academy. In 1723 he took final leave of the capital and retired to his see, where he lived beloved by all until his death in 1742.

MASSILLON

1662—1742

THE SMALL NUMBER OF THE ELECT

And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.—Luke iv., 27.

EVERY day, my brethren, you continue to ask of us, whether the road to heaven is really so difficult, and the number of the saved really so small as we represent? To a question so often proposed, and still oftener resolved, our Savior answers you here, that there were many widows in Israel afflicted with famine; but the widow of Sarepta was alone found worthy the succor of the prophet Elias; that the number of lepers was great in Israel in the time of the prophet Eliseus; and that Naaman was only cured by the man of God.

Were I here, my brethren, for the purpose of alarming, rather than instructing you, I had only to recapitulate what in the holy writings we find dreadful with regard to this great truth; and, running over the history of the just, from age to age, show you that, in all times, the number of the saved has been very small. The family of Noah alone saved from the general flood; Abraham chosen from

among men to be the sole depositary of the covenant with God; Joshua and Caleb the only two of six hundred thousand Hebrews who saw the Land of Promise; Job the only upright man in the land of Uz; Lot, in Sodom. To representations so alarming, would have succeeded the sayings of the prophets. In Isaiah you would see the elect as rare as the grapes which are found after the vintage, and have escaped the search of the gatherer; as rare as the blades which remain by chance in the field, and have escaped the scythe of the mower. The evangelist would still have added new traits to the terrors of these images. I might have spoken to you of two roads—of which one is narrow, rugged, and the path of a very small number; the other broad, open, and strewed with flowers, and almost the general path of men: that everywhere, in the holy writings, the multitude is always spoken of as forming the party of the reprobate; while the saved, compared with the rest of mankind, form only a small flock, scarcely perceptible to the sight. I would have left you in fears with regard to your salvation; always cruel to those who have not renounced faith and every hope of being among the saved. But what would it serve to limit the fruits of this instruction to the single point of setting forth how few persons will be saved? Alas! I would make the danger known, without instructing you

how to avoid it; I would allow you, with the prophet, the sword of the wrath of God suspended over your heads, without assisting you to escape the threatened blow; I would alarm but not instruct the sinner.

My intention is, to-day, to search for the cause of this small number, in our morals and manner of life. As every one flatters himself he will not be excluded, it is of importance to examine if his confidence be well founded. I wish not, in marking to you the causes which render salvation so rare, to make you generally conclude that few will be saved, but to bring you to ask yourselves if, living as you live, you can hope to be saved. Who am I? What am I doing for heaven? And what can be my hopes in eternity? I propose no other order in a matter of such importance. What are the causes which render salvation so rare? I mean to point out three principal causes, which is the only arrangement of this discourse. Art, and far-sought reasonings, would be ill-timed. Oh, attend, therefore, be ye whom ye may. No subject can be more worthy your attention, since it goes to inform you what may be the hopes of your eternal destiny.

Few are saved, because in that number we can only comprehend two descriptions of persons: either those who have been so happy as to preserve their innocence pure and undefiled, or those who, after having lost,

have regained it by penitence. This is the first cause. There are only these two ways of salvation: heaven is only open to the innocent or to the penitent. Now, of which party are you? Are you innocent? Are you penitent?

Nothing unclean shall enter the kingdom of God. We must consequently carry there either an innocence unsullied, or an innocence regained. Now to die innocent is a grace to which few souls can aspire; and to live penitent is a mercy which the relaxed state of our morals renders equally rare. Who, indeed, will pretend to salvation by the chain of innocence? Where are the pure souls in whom sin has never dwelt, and who have preserved to the end the sacred treasure of grace confided to them by baptism, and which our Savior will redemand at the awful day of punishment?

In those happy days when the whole Church was still but an assembly of saints, it was very uncommon to find an instance of a believer who, after having received the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and acknowledged Jesus Christ in the sacrament which regenerates us, fell back to his former irregularities of life. Ananias and Sapphira were the only prevaricators in the Church of Jerusalem; that of Corinth had only one incestuous sinner. Church penitence was then a remedy almost unknown; and scarcely was there found

among these true Israelites one single leper whom they were obliged to drive from the holy altar, and separate from communion with his brethren. But since that time the number of the upright diminishes in proportion as that of believers increases. It would appear that the world, pretending now to have become almost generally Christian, has brought with it into the Church its corruptions and its maxims.

Alas! we all go astray, almost from the breast of our mothers! The first use which we make of our heart is a crime; our first desires are passions; and our reason only expands and increases on the wrecks of our innocence. The earth, says a prophet, is infected by the corruption of those who inhabit it: all have violated the laws, changed the ordinances, and broken the alliance which should have endured forever: all commit sin, and scarcely is there one to be found who does the work of the Lord. Injustice, calumny, lying, treachery, adultery, and the blackest crimes have deluged the earth. The brother lays snares for his brother; the father is divided from his children; the husband from his wife: there is no tie which a vile interest does not sever. Good faith and probity are no longer virtues except among the simple people. Animosities are endless; reconciliations are feints, and never is a former enemy regarded as a brother: they tear, they devour each other.

Assemblies are no longer but for the purpose of public and general censure. The purest virtue is no longer a protection from the malignity of tongues. Gaming is become either a trade, a fraud, or a fury. Repasts —those innocent ties of society—degenerate into excesses of which we dare not speak. Our age witnesses horrors with which our forefathers were unacquainted.

Behold, then, already one path of salvation shut to the generality of men. All have erred. Be ye whom ye may, listen to me now, the time has been when sin reigned over you. Age may perhaps have calmed your passions, but what was your youth? Long and habitual infirmities may perhaps have disgusted you with the world; but what use did you formerly make of the vigor of health? A sudden inspiration of grace may have turned your heart, but do you not most fervently entreat that every moment prior to that inspiration may be effaced from the remembrance of the Lord?

But with what am I taking up time? We are all sinners, O my God! and Thou knowest our hearts! What we know of our errors is, perhaps, in Thy sight, the most pardonable; and we all allow that by innocence we have no claim to salvation. There remains, therefore, only one resource, which is penitence. After our shipwreck, say the saints, it is the timely plank which alone can conduct us into

port; there is no other means of salvation for us. Be ye whom ye may, prince or subject, high or low, penitence alone can save you. Now permit me to ask where are the penitent? You will find more, says a holy father, who have never fallen, than who, after their fall, have raised themselves by true repentance. This is a terrible saying; but do not let us carry things too far: the truth is sufficiently dreadful without adding new terrors to it by vain declamation.

Let us alone examine as to whether the majority of us have a right, through penitence, to salvation. What is a penitent? According to Tertullian, a penitent is a believer who feels every moment his former unhappiness in forsaking and losing his God; one who has his guilt incessantly before his eyes; who finds everywhere the traces and remembrance of it.

A penitent is a man instrusted by God with judgment against himself; one who refuses himself the most innocent pleasures because he had formerly indulged in those the most criminal; one who puts up with the most necessary gratification with pain; one who regards his body as an enemy whom it is necessary to conquer—as an unclean vessel which must be purified—as an unfaithful debtor of whom it is proper to exact to the last farthing. A penitent regards himself as a criminal condemned to death, because he is

no longer worthy of life. In the loss of riches or health he sees only a withdrawal of favors that he had formerly abused: in the humiliations which happen to him, only the pains of his guilt: in the agonies with which he is racked, only the commencement of those punishments he has justly merited. Such is a penitent.

But I again ask you—Where, among us, are penitents of this description? Now look around you. I do not tell you to judge your brethren, but to examine what are the manners and morals of those who surround you. Nor do I speak of those open and avowed sinners who have thrown off even the appearance of virtue. I speak only of those who, like yourselves, live as most live, and whose actions present nothing to the public view particularly shameful or depraved. They are sinners and they admit it: you are not innocent, and you confess it. Now are they penitent? or are you? Age, vocation, more serious employments, may perhaps have checked the sallies of youth. Even the bitterness which the Almighty has made attendant on our passions, the deceits, the treacheries of the world, an injured fortune, with ruined constitution, may have cooled the ardor, and confined the irregular desires of your hearts. Crimes may have disgusted you even with sin itself—for passions gradually extinguish themselves. Time, and the natural

inconstancy of the heart will bring these about; yet, nevertheless, tho detached from sin by incapability, you are no nearer your God. According to the world you are become more prudent, more regular, to a greater extent what it calls men of probity, more exact in fulfilling your public or private duties. But you are not penitent. You have ceased your disorders but you have not expiated them. You are not converted: this great stroke, this grand operation on the heart, which regenerates man, has not yet been felt by you. Nevertheless, this situation, so truly dangerous, does not alarm you. Sins which have never been washed away by sincere repentance, and consequently never obliterated from the book of life, appear in your eyes as no longer existing; and you will tranquilly leave this world in a state of impenitence, so much the more dangerous as you will die without being sensible of your danger.

What I say here is not merely a rash expression, or an emotion of zeal; nothing is more real, or more exactly true: it is the situation of almost all men, even the wisest and most esteemed of the world. The morality of the younger stages of life is always lax, if not licentious. Age, disgust and establishment for life, fix the heart and withdraw it from debauchery: but where are those who are converted? Where are those who expiate their crimes by tears of sorrow and true re-

pentance? Where are those who, having begun as sinners, end as penitents? Show me, in your manner of living, the smallest trace of penitence! Are your graspings at wealth and power, your anxieties to attain the favor of the great—and by these means an increase of employments and influence—are these proofs of it? Would you wish to reckon even your crimes as virtues?—that the sufferings of your ambition, pride, and avarice, should discharge you from an obligation which they themselves have imposed? You are penitent to the world, but are you so to Jesus Christ? The infirmities with which God afflicts you, the enemies He raised up against you, the disgraces and losses with which He tries you—do you receive them all as you ought, with humble submission to His will? Or, rather, far from finding in them occasions of penitence, do you not turn them into the objects of new crimes? It is the duty of an innocent soul to receive with submission the chastisements of the Almighty; to discharge with courage the painful duties of the station allotted to him, and to be faithful to the laws of the gospel. But do sinners owe nothing beyond this? And yet they pretend to salvation! Upon what claim? To say that you are innocent before God, your own consciences will witness against you. To endeavor to persuade yourselves that you are penitent, you dare not; and you would condemn yourselves by

your own mouths. Upon what then dost thou depend, O man! who thus livest so tranquil?

These, my brethren, as I have already told you, are not merely advices and pious arts; they are the most essential of our obligations. But, alas! who fulfils them? Who even knows them? Ah! my brethren, did you know how far the title you bear, of Christian, engages you; could you comprehend the sanctity of your state, the hatred of the world, of yourself, and of everything which is not of God that it enjoys, that gospel life, that constant watching, that guard over the passions, in a word, that conformity with Jesus Christ crucified, which it exacts of you—could you comprehend it, could you remember that you ought to love God with all your heart, and all your strength, so that a single desire that has not connection with Him defiles you—you would appear a monster in your own sight. How! you would exclaim. Duties so holy, and morals so profane! A vigilance so continual, and a life so careless and dissipated! A love of God so pure, so complete, so universal, and a heart the continual prey of a thousand impulses, either foreign or criminal! If thus it is, who, O my God! will be entitled to salvation? Few indeed, I fear, my dear hearers! At least it will not be you (unless a change takes place) nor those who resemble you; it will not be the multitude!

Who shall be saved? Those who work out their salvation with fear and trembling; who live in the world without indulging in its vices. Who shall be saved? That Christian woman who, shut up in the circle of her domestic duties, rears up her children in faith and in piety; divides her heart only between her Savior and her husband; is adorned with delicacy and modesty; sits not down in the assemblies of vanity; makes not a law of the ridiculous customs of the world, but regulates those customs by the law of God; and makes virtue appear more amiable by her rank and her example. Who shall be saved? That believer who, in the relaxation of modern times, imitates the manners of the first Christian—whose hands are clean and his heart pure—who is watchful—who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity, but who, in the midst of the dangers of the great world, continually applies himself to purify it; just—who swears not deceitfully against his neighbor, nor is indebted to fraudulent ways for the aggrandizement of his fortune; generous—who with benefits repays the enemy who sought his ruin; sincere—who sacrifices not the truth to a vile interest, and knows not the part of rendering himself agreeable by betraying his conscience; charitable—who makes his house and interest the refuge of his fellow creatures, and himself the consolation of the afflicted; regards his wealth as

the property of the poor; humble in affliction—a Christian under injuries, and penitent even in prosperity. Who will merit salvation? You, my dear hearer, if you will follow these examples; for such are the souls to be saved. Now these assuredly do not form the greatest number. While you continue, therefore, to live like the multitude, it is a striking proof that you disregard your salvation.

These, my brethren, are truths which should make us tremble! nor are they those vague ones which are told to all men, and which none apply to themselves. Perhaps there is not in this assembly an individual who may not say of himself, "I live like the great number; like those of my rank, age, and situation; I am lost, should I die in this path." Now, can anything be more capable of alarming a soul, in whom some remains of care for his salvation shall exist? It is the multitude, nevertheless, who tremble not. There is only a small number of the just who work out severally their salvation with fear and trembling. All the rest are tranquil. After having lived with the multitude, they flatter themselves they shall be particularized at death. Every one augurs favorably for himself, and vainly imagines that he shall be an exception.

On this account it is, my brethren, that I confine myself to you who are now here as-

sembled. I include not the rest of men; but consider you as alone existing on the earth. The idea which fills and terrifies me is this —I figure to myself the present as your last hour, and the end of the world! the heavens opening above your heads—the Savior, in all His glory, about to appear in the midst of His temple—you only assembled here as trembling criminals, to wait His coming, and hear the sentence, either of life eternal, or everlasting death! for it is vain to flatter yourselves that you shall die more innocent than you are at this hour. All those desires of change with which you are amused, will continue to amuse you till death arrives. The experience of all ages proves it. The only difference you have to expect will most likely be only a larger balance against you than what you would have to answer for now; and from what would be your destiny, were you to be judged in this moment, you may almost decide upon what it will be at death. Now, I ask you—and, connecting my own lot with yours, I ask it with dread—were Jesus Christ to appear in this temple, in the midst of this assembly, to judge us, to make the awful separation between the sheep and the goats, do you believe that the most of us would be placed at His right hand? Do you believe that the number would at least be equal? Do you believe that there would even be found ten upright and faithful servants of the

Lord, when formerly five cities could not furnish that number? I ask you! You know not! I know it not! Thou alone, O my God, knowest who belong to Thee.

But if we know not who belong to Him, at least we know that sinners do not. Now, who are the just and faithful assembled here at present? Titles and dignities avail nothing; you are stript of all these in the presence of your Savior! Who are they? Many sinners who wish not to be converted; many more who wish, but always put it off; many others who are only converted in appearance, and again fall back to their former course; in a word, a great number, who flatter themselves they have no occasion for conversion. This is the party of the reprobate! Ah! my brethren, cut off from this assembly these four classes of sinners, for they will be cut off at the great day! And now stand forth ye righteous:—where are ye? O God, where are Thine elect! What remains as Thy portion!

My brethren, our ruin is almost certain! Yet we think not of it! If in this terrible separation, which will one day take place; there should be but one sinner in the assembly on the side of the reprobate, and a voice from heaven should assure us of it, without particularizing him, who of us would not tremble, lest he be the unfortunate and devoted wretch? Who of us would not imme-

diately apply to his conscience, to examine if its crimes merited not this punishment? Who of us, seized with dread, would not demand of our Savior, as did the apostles, crying out, "Lord, is it I?" And should a small respite be allowed to our prayers, who of us would not use every effort, by tears, supplication, and sincere repentance, to avert the misfortune?

Are we in our senses, my dear hearers? Perhaps among all who listen to me now, ten righteous ones would not be found. It may be fewer still. What do I perceive, O my God! I dare not, with a fixt eye, regard the depths of Thy judgments and justice! Not more than one, perhaps, would be found among us all! And this danger affects you not, my dear hearer! You persuade yourself that in this great number who shall perish, you will be the happy individual! You, you have less reason, perhaps, than any other to believe it! You, upon whom alone the sentence of death should fall, were only one of all who hear me to suffer! Great God! how little are the terrors of Thy law known to the world? In all ages the just have shuddered with dread in reflecting on the severity and extent of Thy judgments, touching the destinies of men! Alas! what are they laying up in store for the sons of men!

But what are we to conclude from these awful truths? That all must despair of sal-

vation? God forbid! The impious alone, to quiet his own feelings in his debaucheries, endeavors to persuade himself that all men shall perish as well as he. This idea ought not to be the fruit of the present discourse. It is intended to undeceive you with regard to the general error, that any one may do whatever is done by others. To convince you that, in order to merit salvation, you must distinguish yourself from the rest; that in the midst of the world you are to live for God's glory, and not follow after the multitude.

When the Jews were led in captivity from Judea to Babylon, a little before they quitted their own country, the prophet Jeremiah, whom the Lord had forbidden to leave Jerusalem, spoke thus to them: "Children of Israel, when you shall arrive at Babylon, you will behold the inhabitants of that country, who carry upon their shoulders gods of silver and gold. All the people will prostrate themselves and adore them. But you, far from allowing yourselves, by these examples, to be led to impiety, say to yourselves in secret, It is Thou, O Lord! whom we ought to adore."

Let me now finish by addressing to you the same words.

At your departure from this temple, you go to enter into another Babylon. You go to see the idols of gold and silver, before which all men prostrate themselves. You go to regain the vain objects of human passions, wealth,

glory, and pleasure, which are the gods of this world and which almost all men adore. You will see those abuses which all the world permits, those errors which custom authorizes, and those debaucheries, which an infamous fashion has almost constituted as laws. Then, my dear hearer, if you wish to be of the small number of true Israelites, say, in the secrecy of your heart, "It is Thou alone, O my God! whom we ought to adore. I wish not to have connection with a people which know Thee not; I will have no other law than Thy holy law; the gods which this foolish multitude adore are not gods; they are the work of the hands of men; they will perish with them; Thou alone, O my God! art immortal; and Thou alone deservest to be adored. The customs of Babylon have no connection with the holy laws of Jerusalem. I will continue to worship Thee, with that small number of the children of Abraham which still, in the midst of an infidel nation, composes Thy people; with them I will turn all my desires toward the holy Zion. The singularity of my manners will be regarded as a weakness; but blest weakness, O my God! which will give me strength to resist the torrent of customs, and the seduction of example. Thou wilt be my God in the midst of Babylon, as Thou wilt one day be in Jerusalem above!"

Ah! the time of the captivity will at last expire. Thou wilt call to Thy remembrance

Abraham and David. Thou wilt deliver Thy people. Thou wilt transport us to the holy city. Then wilt Thou alone reign over Israel, and over the nations which at present know Thee not. All being destroyed, all the empires of the earth, all the monuments of human pride annihilated, and Thou alone remaining eternal, we then shall know that Thou art the Lord of hosts, and the only God to be adored.

Behold the fruit which you ought to reap from this discourse! Live apart. Think, without ceasing, that the great number work their own destruction. Regard as nothing all customs of the earth, unless authorized by the law of God, and remember that holy men in all ages have been looked upon as a peculiar people.

It is thus that, after distinguishing yourselves from the sinful on earth, you will be gloriously distinguished from them in eternity!

SAURIN

PAUL BEFORE FELIX AND DRUSILLA

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Jacques Saurin, the famous French Protestant preacher of the seventeenth century, was born at Nismes in 1677. He studied at Geneva and was appointed to the Walloon Church in London in 1701. The scene of his great life work was, however, the Hague, where he settled in 1705. He has been compared with Bossuet, tho he never attained the graceful style and subtilty which characterize the "Eagle of Meaux." The story is told of the famous scholar Le Clerc that he long refused to hear Saurin preach, on the ground that he gave too much attention to mere art. One day he consented to hear him on the condition that he should be permitted to sit behind the pulpit where he could not see his oratorical action. At the close of the sermon he found himself in front of the pulpit, with tears in his eyes. Saurin died in 1730.

SAURIN

1677—1730

PAUL BEFORE FELIX AND DRUSILLA

And before certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith of Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.—Acts xxiv., 24, 25.

My brethren, tho the kingdoms of the righteous be not of this world, they present, however, amidst their meanness, marks of dignity and power. They resemble Jesus Christ. He humbled Himself so far as to take the form of a servant, but frequently exercised the rights of a sovereign. From the abyss of humiliation to which He condescended, emanations of the Godhead were seen to proceed. Lord of nature, He commanded the winds and seas. He bade the storm and tempest subside. He restored health to the sick, and life to the dead. He imposed silence on the rabbis; He embarrassed Pilate on the throne; and disposed of Paradise at the moment He Himself was pierced with the nails, and fixt on the cross.

Behold the portrait of believers! "They are dead. Their life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii., 3.) "If they had hope only in this life, they were of all men most miserable." (I Cor. xv., 19.) Nevertheless, they show I know not what superiority of birth. Their glory is not so concealed but we sometimes perceive its luster! just as the children of a king, when unknown and in a distant province, betray in their conversation and carriage indications of illustrious descent.

We might illustrate this truth by numerous instances. Let us attend to that in our text. There we shall discover that association of humility and grandeur, of reproach and glory, which constitutes the condition of the faithful while on earth. Behold St. Paul, a Christian, an apostle, a saint. See him hurried from tribunal to tribunal, from province to province; sometimes before the Romans, sometimes before the Jews, sometimes before the high-priest of the synagog, and sometimes before the procurator of Cæsar. See him conducted from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, and summoned to appear before Felix. In all these traits, do you not recognize the Christian walking in the narrow way, the way of tribulation, marked by his Master's feet? But consider him nearer still. Examine his discourse, look at his countenance; there you will see a fortitude, a courage, and a dignity which constrain you to acknowledge

that there was something really grand in the person of St. Paul. He preached Jesus Christ at the very moment he was persecuted for having preached Him. He preached even when in chains. He did more; he attacked his judge on the throne. He reasoned, he enforced, he thundered. He seemed already to exercise the function of judging the world, which God has reserved for His saints. He made Felix tremble. Felix felt himself borne away by a superior force. Unable to hear St. Paul any longer without appalling fears, he sent him away. "After certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ," etc.

We find here three considerations which claim our attention: An enlightened preacher, who discovers a very peculiar discernment in the selection of his subject; a conscience appalled and confounded on the recollection of its crimes and of that awful judgment where they must be weighed, a sinner alarmed, but not converted; a sinner who desires to be saved, but delays his conversion: a case, alas! of but too common occurrence.

You perceive already, my brethren, the subject of this discourse: first, that St. Paul reasoned before Felix and Drusilla of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; second, that Felix trembled; third, that he sent the apostle away; three considerations

which shall divide this discourse. May it produce on your hearts, on the hearts of Christians, the same effects St. Paul produced on the soul of this heathen; but may it have a happier influence on your lives. Amen.

Paul preached before Felix and Drusilla "on righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." This is the first subject of discussion. Before, however, we proceed further with our remarks, we must first sketch the character of this Felix and this Drusilla, which will serve as a basis to the first proposition.

After the scepter was departed from Judah, and the Jewish nation subjugated by Pompey, the Roman emperors governed the country by procurators. Claudius filled the imperial throne while St. Paul was at Cæsarea. This emperor had received a servile education from his grandmother Lucia, and from his mother Antonia; and having been brought up in obsequious meanness, evinced, on his elevation to the empire, marks of the inadequate care which had been bestowed on his infancy. He had neither courage nor dignity of mind. He who was raised to sway the Roman scepter, and consequently to govern the civilized world, abandoned his judgment to his freedmen, and gave them a complete ascendency over his mind. Felix was one of those freedmen. "He exercised in Judea the imperial functions with a mercenary soul." Voluptuous-

ness and avarice were the predominant vices of his heart. We have a proof of his avarice immediately after our text, where it is said he sent for Paul,—not to hear him concerning the truth of the gospel which this apostle had preached with so much power; not to inquire whether this religion, against which the Jews raised the standard, was contrary to the interest of the State; but because he hoped to have received money for his liberation. Here is the effect of avarice.

Josephus recited an instance of his voluptuousness. It is his marriage with Drusilla. She was a Jewess, as is remarked in our text. King Azizus, her former husband, was a heathen; and in order to gain her affections, he had conformed to the most rigorous ceremonies of Judaism. Felix saw her, and became enamored of her beauty. He conceived for her a violent passion; and in defiance of the sacred ties which had united her to her husband, he resolved to become master of her person. His addresses were received. Drusilla violated her former engagements, and chose rather to contract with Felix an illegitimate marriage than to adhere to the chaste ties which united her to Azizus. Felix the Roman, Felix the procurator of Judea and the favorite of Cæsar appeared to her a noble acquisition. It is indeed a truth, we may here observe, that grandeur and fortune are charms which mortals find the greatest

difficulty to resist, and against which the purest virtue has need to be armed with all its constancy. Recollect these two characters of Felix and Drusilla. St. Paul, before those two personages, treated concerning "The faith in Christ"; that is, concerning the Christian religion, of which Jesus Christ is the sum and substance, the author and the end: and from the numerous doctrines of Christianity, he selected "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come."

Here is, my brethren, an admirable text; but a text selected with discretion. Fully to comprehend it, recollect the character we have given of Felix. He was covetous, luxurious, and governor of Judea. St. Paul selected three subjects, correspondent to the characteristics. Addressing an avaricious man, he treated of righteousness. Addressing the governor of Judea, one of those persons who think themselves independent and responsible to none but themselves for their conduct, he treated of "judgment to come."

But who can here supply the brevity of the historian, and report the whole of what the apostle said to Felix on these important points? It seems to me that I hear him enforcing those important truths he has left us in his works, and placing in the fullest luster those divine maxims interspersed in our Scriptures. "He reasoned of righteousness." There he maintained the right of the widow

and the orphan. There he demonstrated that kings and magistrates are established to maintain the rights of the people, and not to indulge their own caprice; that the design of the supreme authority is to make the whole happy by the vigilance of one, and not to gratify one at the expense of all; that it is meanness of mind to oppress the wretched, who have no defense but cries and tears; and that nothing is so unworthy of an enlightened man as that ferocity with which some are inspired by dignity, and which obstructs their respect for human nature, when undisguised by worldly pomp; that nothing is so noble as goodness and grandeur, associated in the same character; that this is the highest felicity; that in some sort it transforms the soul into the image of God; who, from the high abodes of majesty in which He dwells, surrounded with angels and cherubim, deigns to look down on this mean world which we inhabit, and "Leaves not Himself without witness, doing good to all."

"He reasoned of temperance." There he would paint the licentious effects of voluptuousness. There he would demonstrate how opposite is this propensity to the spirit of the gospel; which everywhere enjoins retirement, mortification, and self-denial. He would show how it degrades the finest characters who have suffered it to predominate. Intemperance renders the mind incapable of

reflection. It debases the courage. It debilitates the mind. It softens the soul. He would demonstrate the meanness of a man called to preside over a great people, who exposes his foibles to public view; not having resolution to conceal, much less to vanquish them. With Drusilla, he would make human motives supply the defects of divine; with Felix, he would make divine motives supply the defects of human. He would make this shameless woman feel that nothing on earth is more odious than a woman destitute of honor, that modesty is an attribute of the sex; that an attachment, uncemented by virtue, can not long subsist; that those who receive illicit favors are the first, according to the fine remark of a sacred historian, to detest the indulgence: "The hatred wherewith 'Ammon, the son of David,' hated his sister, after the gratification of his brutal passion, was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her" (II Sam. xiii., 15). He would make Felix perceive that, however the depravity of the age might seem to tolerate a criminal intercourse with persons of the other sex, with God, who has called us all to equal purity, the crime was not less heinous.

"He reasoned," in short, "of judgment to come." And here he would magnify his ministry. When our discourses are regarded as connected only with the present period, their force, I grant, is of no avail. We speak for

a Master who has left us clothed with infirmities, which discover no illustrious marks of Him by whom we are sent. We have only our voice, only our exhortations, only our entreaties. Nature is not averted at our pleasure. The visitations of Heaven do not descend at our command to punish your indolence and revolts: that power was very limited, even to the apostle. The idea of a future state, the solemnities of a general judgment, supply our weakness, and St. Paul enforced this motive; he proved its reality, he delineated its luster, he displayed its pomp. He resounded in the ears of Felix the noise, the voices, the trumpets. He showed him the small and the great, the rich man and Lazarus, Felix the favorite of Cæsar, and Paul the captive of Felix, awakened by that awful voice: "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment."

But not to be precipitate in commending the apostle's preaching. Its encomiums will best appear by attending to its effects on the mind of Felix. St. Jerome wished, concerning a preacher of his time, that the tears of his audience might compose the eulogy of his sermons. We shall find in the tears of Felix occasion to applaud the eloquence of our apostle. We shall find that his discourses were thunder and lightning in the congregation, as the Greeks used to say concerning one of their orators. While St. Paul preached, Felix felt I know not what agitations in his

mind. The recollection of his past life; the sight of his present sins; Drusilla, the object of his passion and subject of his crime; the courage of St. Paul—all terrified him. His heart burned while that disciple of Jesus Christ expounded the Scriptures. The word of God was quick and powerful. The apostle, armed with the two-edged sword, divided the soul, the joints, and the marrow, carried conviction to the heart. Felix trembled, adds our historian, Felix trembled! The fears of Felix are our second reflection.

What a surprizing scene, my brethren, is here presented to your view. The governor trembled, and the captive spoke without dismay. The captive made the governor tremble. The governor shuddered in the presence of the captive. It would not be surprizing, brethren, if we should make an impression on your hearts (and we shall do so, indeed, if our ministry is not, as usual, a sound of empty words); it would not be surprizing if we should make some impression on the hearts of our hearers. This sanctuary, these solemnities, these groans, this silence, these arguments, these efforts,—all aid our ministry, and unite to convince and persuade you. But here is an orator destitute of these extraneous aids: behold him without any ornament but the truth he preached. What do I say? that he was destitute of extraneous aids? See him in a situation quite the reverse,—a captive,

loaded with irons, standing before his judge. Yet he made Felix tremble. Felix trembled! Whence proceeded this fear, and this confusion? Nothing is more worthy of your inquiry. Here we must stop for a moment: follow us while we trace this fear to its source. We shall consider the character of Felix under different views; as a heathen, imperfectly acquainted with a future judgment, and the life to come; as a prince, or governor, accustomed to see every one humble at his feet; as an avaricious magistrate, loaded with extortions and crimes; in short, as a voluptuous man, who has never restricted the gratification of his senses. These are so many reasons of Felix's fears.

First, we shall consider Felix as a heathen, imperfectly acquainted with a future judgment and the life to come: I say, imperfectly acquainted, and not as wholly ignorant, the heathens having the "work of the law written in their hearts" (Rom. ii., 15). The force of habit had corrupted nature, but had not effaced its laws. They acknowledged a judgment to come, but their notions were confused concerning its nature.

Such were the principles of Felix, or rather such were the imperfections of his principles, when he heard this discourse of St. Paul. You may infer his fears from his character. Figure to yourselves a man hearing for the first time the maxims of equity and righteous-

ness inculcated in the gospel. Figure to yourselves a man who heard corrected the immorality of pagan theology; what was doubtful, illustrated; and what was right, enforced. See a man who knew of no other God but the incestuous Jupiter, the lascivious Venus, taught that he must appear before Him, in whose presence the seraphim veil their faces, and the heavens are not clean. Behold a man, whose notions were confused concerning the state of souls after death, apprized that God shall judge the world in righteousness. See a man who saw described the smoke, the fire, the chains of darkness, the outer darkness, the lake of fire and brimstone; and who saw them delineated by one animated by the Spirit of God. What consternation must have been excited by these terrific truths!

This we are incapable adequately of comprehending. We must surmount the insensibility acquired by custom. It is but too true that our hearts—instead of being imprest by these truths, in proportion to their discussion—become more obdurate. We hear them without alarm, having so frequently heard them before. But if, like Felix, we had been brought up in the darkness of paganism, and if another Paul had come and opened our eyes, and unveiled those sacred terrors, how exceedingly should we have feared! This was the case with Felix. He perceived the

bandage which conceals the sight of futurity drop in a moment. He heard St. Paul, that herald of grace and ambassador to the Gentiles, he heard him reason on temperance and a judgment to come. His soul was amazed; his heart trembled; his knees smote one against another.

Amazing effects, my brethren, of conscience! Evident argument of the vanity of those gods whom idolatry adorns after it has given them form! Jupiter and Mercury, it is true, had their altars in the temples of the heathens; but the God of heaven and earth has His tribunal in the heart: and, while idolatry presents its incense to sacrilegious and incestuous deities, the God of heaven and earth reveals His terrors to the conscience, and there loudly condemns both incest and sacrilege.

Secondly, consider Felix as a prince; and you will find in this second office a second cause of his fear. When we perceive the great men of the earth devoid of every principle of religion, and even ridiculing those very truths which are the objects of our faith, we feel that faith to waver. They excite a certain suspicion in the mind that our sentiments are only prejudices, which have become rooted in man, brought up in the obscurity of humble life. Here is the apology of religion. The Caligulas, the Neros, those potentates of the universe, have trembled in their turn as well

as the meanest of their subjects. This independence of mind, so conspicuous among libertines, is consequently an art,—not of disengaging themselves from prejudices, but of shutting their eyes against the light, and of extinguishing the purest sentiments of the heart. Felix, educated in a court fraught with the maxims of the great instantly ridicules the apostle's preaching. St. Paul, undismayed, attacks him, and finds a conscience concealed in his bosom: the very dignity of Felix is constrained to aid our apostle by adding weight to his ministry. He demolishes the edifice of Felix's pride. He shows that if a great nation was dependent on his pleasure, he himself was dependent on a Sovereign in whose presence the kings of the earth are as nothing. He proves that dignities are so very far from exempting men from the judgment of God that, for this very reason, their account becomes the more weighty, riches being a trust which Heaven has committed to the great: and "where much is given, much is required." He makes him feel this awful truth, that princes are responsible, not only for their own souls, but also for those of their subjects; their good or bad example influencing, for the most part, the people committed to their care.

See then Felix in one moment deprived of his tribunal. The judge became a party. He saw himself rich and in need of nothing; and

yet he was "blind, and naked, and poor." He heard a voice from the God of the whole earth, saying unto him, "Thou profane and wicked prince, remove the diadem and take off the crown. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more" (Ezekiel xxi., 25-27). "Tho thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and tho thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord" (Obadiah, 4). Neither the dignity of governor, nor the favor of Cæsar, nor all the glory of empire shall deliver thee out of My hand.

Thirdly, I restrict myself, my brethren, as much as possible in order to execute without exceeding my limits the plan I have conceived; and proceed to consider Felix as an avaricious man: to find in this disposition a further cause of his fear. Felix was avaricious, and St. Paul instantly transported him into a world in which avarice shall receive its appropriate and most severe punishment. For you know that the grand test by which we shall be judged is charity. "I was hungry, and ye gave me meat"; and of all the constructions of charity covetousness is the most obstinate and insurmountable.

This unhappy propensity renders us insensible of our neighbor's necessities. It magnifies the estimate of our wants; it diminishes the wants of others. It persuades us that we have need of all, that others have need of

nothing. Felix began to perceive the iniquity of this passion, and to feel that he was guilty of double idolatry: idolatry in morality, idolatry in religion; idolatry in having offered incense to gods, who were not the makers of heaven and earth; idolatry in having offered incense to Mammon. For the Scriptures teach, and experience confirms, that "covetousness is idolatry." The covetous man is not a worshiper of the true God. Gold and silver are the divinities he adores. His heart is with his treasure. Here then is the portrait of Felix: a portrait drawn by St. Paul in the presence of Felix, and which reminded this prince of innumerable prohibitions, innumerable frauds, innumerable extortions; of the widow and the orphan he opprest. Here is the cause of Felix's fears. According to an expression of St. James, the "rust of his gold and silver began to witness against him, and to eat his flesh as with fire" (James v., 3).

Fourthly, consider Felix as a voluptuous man. Here is the final cause of his fear. Without repeating all we have said on the depravity of this passion, let one remark suffice, that, if the torments of hell are terrible at all, they must especially be so to the voluptuous. The voluptuous man never restricts his sensual gratification; his soul dies on the slightest approach of pain. What a terrific impression must not the thought of judgment make on such a character. Shall I, accus-

tomed to indulgence and pleasure, become a prey to the worm that dieth not and fuel to the fire which is not quenched? Shall I, who avoid pain with so much caution, be condemned to eternal torments? Shall I have neither delicious meats nor voluptuous delights? This body, my idol, which I habituate to so much delicacy, shall it be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, whose smoke ascendeth up forever and ever?" And this effeminate habit I have of refining on pleasure, will it render me only the more sensible of my destruction and anguish?

Such are the traits of Felix's character; such are the causes of Felix's fear. Happy, if his fear had produced that "godly sorrow, and that repentance unto salvation not to be repented of." Happy if the fear of hell had induced him to avoid its torments. But, ah no! he feared, and yet persisted in the causes of his fear. He trembled, yet said to St. Paul, "Go thy way for this time." This is our last reflection.

How preposterous, my brethren, is the sinner! What absurdities does he cherish in his heart! For, in short, had the doctrines St. Paul preached to Felix been the productions of his brain:—had the thought of a future judgment been a chimera, whence proceeded the fears of Felix? Why was he so weak as to admit this panic of terror? If, on the contrary, Paul had truth and argument on his

side, why did Felix send him away? Such are the contradictions of the sinner. He wishes; he revolts; he denies; he grants; he trembles; and says, "Go thy way for this time." Speak to him concerning the truths of religion, open hell to his view, and you will see him affected, devout, and appalled: follow him in life, and you will find that these truths have no influence whatever on his conduct.

But are we not mistaken concerning Felix? Did not the speech of St. Paul make a deeper impression upon him than we seem to allow? He sent the apostle away, it is true, but it was "for this time" only. And who can censure this delay? The infirmities of human nature require relaxation and repose. Felix could afterward recall him. "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will send for thee."

It pains me, I confess, my brethren, in entering on this head of my discourse, that I should exhibit to you in the person of Felix the portrait of whom? Of wicked men? Alas! of nearly the whole of this assembly; most of whom seem to us living in negligence and vice, running with the children of this world "to the same excess of riot." One would suppose that they had already made their choice, having embraced one or the other of these notions: either that religion is a fantom, or that, all things considered, it is better

to endure the torments of hell than to be restricted to the practise of virtue. Oh no! that is not their notion. Ask the worse among them. Ask whether they have renounced their salvation. You will not find an individual who will say that he has renounced it. Ask them again whether they think it attainable by following this way of life. They will answer, No. Ask them afterward how they reconcile things so opposite as their life and their hopes. They will answer that they are resolved to reform, and by and by they will enter on the work. They will say, as Felix said to St. Paul, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Nothing is less wise than this delay. At a future period I will reform. But who has assured me that at a future period I shall have opportunities of conversion? Who has assured me that God will continue to call me, and that another Paul shall thunder in my ears?

I will reform at a future period. But who has told me that God at a future period will accompany His word with the powerful aids of grace? While Paul may plant and Apollos may water, is it not God who gives the increase? How then can I flatter myself that the Holy Spirit will continue to knock at the door of my heart after I shall have so frequently obstructed His admission?

I will reform in future. But who has told

me that I shall ever desire to be converted? Do not habits become confirmed in proportion as they are indulged? And is not an inveterate evil very difficult to cure? If I can not bear the excision of a slight gangrene, how shall I sustain the operation when the wound is deep?

I will reform in future! But who has told me that I shall live to a future period? Does not death advance every moment with gigantic strides? Does he not assail the prince in his palace and the peasant in his cottage? Does he not send before him monitors and messengers: acute pains, which wholly absorb the soul; deliriums, which render reason of no avail; deadly stupors, which benumb the brightest and most piercing geniuses? And what is still more awful, does He not daily come without either warning or messenger? Does He not snatch away this man without allowing him time to be acquainted with the essentials of religion; and that man, without the restitution of riches ill acquired; and the other, before he is reconciled to his enemy?

Instead of saying "Go thy way for this time" we should say, Stay for this time. Stay, while the Holy Spirit is knocking at the door of my heart; stay, while my conscience is alarmed; stay, while I yet live; "while it is called to-day." The arguments confounded my conscience: no matter. "Thy hand is heavy upon me": no matter still.

Cut, strike, consume; provided it procure my salvation.

But, however criminal this delay may be, we seem desirous to excuse it. "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." It was Felix's business then which induced him to put off the apostle. Unhappy business! Awful occupation! It seems an enviable situation, my brethren, to be placed at the head of a province; to speak in the language of majesty; to decide on the fortunes of a numerous people; and in all cases to be the ultimate judge. But those situations, so happy and so dazzling in appearance, are in the main dangerous to the conscience. Those innumerable concerns, this noise and bustle, entirely dissipate the soul. While so much engaged on earth, we can not be mindful of heaven. When we have no leisure we say to St. Paul, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

Happy he who, amid the tumult of the most active life, has hours consecrated to reflection, to the examination of his conscience, and to insure the "one thing needful." Or, rather, happy he who, in the repose of the middle classes of society,—places between indigence and affluence, far from the courts of the great, having neither poverty nor riches according to Agur's wish,—can in retirement and quietness see life sweetly glide away, and

make salvation, if not the sole, yet his principal, concern.

Felix not only preferred his business to his salvation, but he mentions it with evasive disdain. "When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." "When I have a convenient season!" Might we not thence infer that the truths discust by St. Paul were not of serious importance? Might we not infer that the soul of Felix was created for the government of Judea; and that the grand doctrines of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come ought to serve at most but to pass away the time, or merely to engross one's leisure—"when I have a convenient season?" . . .

Yes, Christians, this is the only moment on which we can reckon. It is, perhaps, the only acceptable time. It is, perhaps, the last day of our visitation. Let us improve a period so precious. Let us no longer say by and by—at another time; but let us say to-day—this moment—even now. Let the pastor say: I have been insipid in my sermons, and remiss in my conduct; having been more solicitous, during the exercise of my ministry, to advance my family than to build up the Lord's house, I will preach hereafter with fervor and zeal. I will be vigilant, sober, rigorous, and disinterested. Let the miser say: I have riches ill acquired. I will purge my house of illicit wealth. I will overturn the altar of Mammon

and erect another to the supreme Jehovah. Let the prodigal say: I will extinguish the unhappy fires by which I am consumed and kindle in my bosom the flame of divine love. Ah, unhappy passions, which war against my soul; sordid attachments; irregular propensities; emotions of concupiscence; law in the members,—I will know you no more. I will make with you an eternal divorce, I will from this moment open my heart to the eternal Wisdom, who condescends to ask it.

If we are in this happy disposition, if we thus become regenerate, we shall enjoy from this moment foretastes of the glory which God has prepared. From this moment the truths of religion, so far from casting discouragement and terror on the soul, shall heighten its consolation and joy; from this moment heaven shall open to this audience, paradise shall descend into your hearts, and the Holy Spirit shall come and dwell there. He will bring that peace, and those joys, which pass all understanding.

EDWARDS

SPIRITUAL LIGHT

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

JONATHAN EDWARDS, the New England divine and metaphysician, was born at East Windsor, Connecticut, in 1703. He was graduated early from Yale College, where he had given much attention to philosophy, became tutor of his college, and at nineteen began to preach. His voice and manner did not lend themselves readily to pulpit oratory, but his clear, logical, and intense presentation of the truth produced a profound and permanent effect upon his hearers. He wrote what were considered the most important philosophical treatises of his time. His place among the thinkers of the world is high and indisputable. He had many gifts of intellect and imagination, and a uniform gravity that left no doubt as to his deeply earnest nature. He was one of the greatest preachers of his age. His most widely quoted sermon, "Sinners in the Eyes of an Angry God," while powerful and impressive, does not do him justice. It is believed the sermon presented here discloses to greater advantage the tender and saintly side of his character. He died in 1758.

EDWARDS

1703—1758

SPIRITUAL LIGHT

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.—Matthew xvi., 17.

CHRIST says these words to Peter upon occasion of his professing his faith in Him as the Son of God. Our Lord was inquiring of His disciples, who men said He was; not that He needed to be informed, but only to introduce and give occasion to what follows. They answer, that some said He was John the Baptist, and some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. When they had thus given an account of who others said He was, Christ asks them, who they said He was? Simon Peter, whom we find always zealous and forward, was the first to answer: he readily replied to the question, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.

Upon this occasion Christ says as He does to him, and of him in the text: in which we may observe,

1. That Peter is pronounced blest on this account. "Blessed art Thou."—"Thou art a happy man, that thou art not ignorant of

this, that I am Christ, the Son of the living God. Thou art distinguishingly happy. Others are blinded, and have dark and deluded apprehensions, as you have now given an account, some thinking that I am Elias, and some that I am Jeremias, and some one thing and some another; but none of them thinking right, all of them misled. Happy art thou, that art so distinguished as to know the truth in this matter."

2. The evidence of this his happiness declared; viz., that God, and He only, had revealed it to him. This is an evidence of his being blest.

First. As it shows how peculiarly favored he was of God above others: "How highly favored art thou, that others that are wise and great men, the scribes, Pharisees, and rulers, and the nation in general, are left in darkness, to follow their own misguided apprehensions; and that thou shouldst be singled out, as it were, by name, that my heavenly Father should thus set His love on thee, Simon Barjona. This argues thee blest, that thou shouldst thus be the object of God's distinguishing love."

Secondly. It evidences his blessedness also, as it intimates that this knowledge is above any that flesh and blood can reveal. "This is such knowledge as my Father which is in heaven only can give: it is too high and excellent to be communicated by such means

as other knowledge is. Thou art blest, that thou knowest that which God alone can teach thee."

The original of this knowledge is here declared, both negatively and positively. Positively, as God is here declared the author of it. Negatively, as it is declared, that flesh and blood had not revealed it. God is the author of all knowledge and understanding whatsoever. He is the author of the knowledge that is obtained by human learning: He is the author of all moral prudence, and of the knowledge and skill that men have in their secular business. Thus it is said of all in Israel that were wise-hearted, and skilful in embroidering, that God had filled them with the spirit of wisdom. (Exod. xxviii., 3.)

God is the author of such knowledge; but yet not so but that flesh and blood reveals it. Mortal men are capable of imparting that knowledge of human arts and sciences, and skill in temporal affairs. God is the author of such knowledge by those means: flesh and blood is made use of by God as the mediate or second cause of it; he conveys it by the power and influence of natural means. But this spiritual knowledge, spoken of in the text, is that God is the author of, and none else: he reveals it, and flesh and blood reveals it not. He imparts this knowledge immediately, not making use of any intermediate natural causes, as he does in other knowledge.

What has passed in the preceding discourse naturally occasioned Christ to observe this; because the disciples had been telling how others did not know Him, but were generally mistaken about Him, and divided and confounded in their opinions of Him: but Peter had declared his assured faith, that He was the Son of God. Now it was natural to observe, how it was not flesh and blood that had revealed it to him, but God: for if this knowledge were dependent on natural causes or means, how came it to pass that they, a company of poor fishermen, illiterate men, and persons of low education, attained to the knowledge of the truth; while the scribes and Pharisees, men of vastly higher advantages and greater knowledge and sagacity in other matters, remained in ignorance? This could be owing only to the gracious distinguishing influence and revelation of the Spirit of God. Hence, what I would make the subject of my present discourse from these words, is this doctrine. That there is such a thing as a spiritual and divine light, immediately imparted to the soul by God, of a different nature from any that is obtained by natural means.

1. Those convictions that natural men may have of their sin and misery is not this spiritual and divine light. Men in a natural condition may have convictions of the guilt that lies upon them, and of the anger of God, and

their danger of divine vengeance. Such convictions are from light or sensibleness of truth. That some sinners have a greater conviction of their guilt and misery than others, is because some have more light, or more of an apprehension of truth than others. And this light and conviction may be from the Spirit of God; the Spirit convinces men of sin: but yet nature is much more concerned in it than in the communication of that spiritual and divine light that is spoken of in the doctrine; it is from the Spirit of God only as assisting natural principles, and not as infusing any new principles. Common grace differs from special, in that it influences only by assisting of nature; and not by imparting grace, or bestowing anything above nature. The light that is obtained is wholly natural, or of no superior kind to what mere nature attains to, tho more of that kind be obtained than would be obtained if men were left wholly to themselves: or, in other words, common grace only assists the faculties of the soul to do that more fully which they do by nature, as natural conscience or reason will by mere nature, make a man sensible of guilt, and will accuse and condemn him when he has done amiss. Conscience is a principle natural to men; and the work that it doth naturally, or of itself, is to give an apprehension of right and wrong, and to suggest to the mind the relation that there is between

right and wrong and a retribution. The Spirit of God, in those convictions which unregenerate men sometimes have, assist conscience to do this work in a further degree than it would do if they were left to themselves: He helps it against those things that tend to stupify it, and obstruct its exercise. But in the renewing and sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, those things are wrought in the soul that are above nature, and of which there is nothing of the like kind in the soul by nature; and they are caused to exist in the soul habitually, and according to such a stated constitution or law that lays such a foundation of exercises in a continued course, as is called a principal of nature. Not only are remaining principles assisted to do their work more freely and fully, but those principles are restored that were utterly destroyed by the fall; and the mind thenceforward habitually exerts those acts that the dominion of sin has made it as wholly destitute of, as a dead body is of vital acts.

The Spirit of God acts in a very different manner in the one case, from what He doth in the other. He may indeed act upon the mind of a natural man, but He acts in the mind of a saint as an indwelling vital principle. He acts upon the mind of an unregenerate person as an extrinsic, occasional agent; for in acting upon them, He doth not unite Himself to them; for notwithstanding all His influences

that they may be the subjects of, they are still sensual, having not the Spirit (Jude 19). But He unites Himself with the mind of a saint, takes him for his temple, actuates and influences him as a new supernatural principle of life and action. There is this difference, that the Spirit of God, in acting in the soul of a godly man, exerts and communicates Himself there in his own proper nature. Holiness is the proper nature of the spirit of God. The Holy Spirit operates in the minds of the godly, by uniting Himself to them, and living in them, and exerting His own nature in the exercise of their faculties. The Spirit of God may act upon a creature, and yet not in acting communicate Himself. The Spirit of God may act upon inanimate creatures; as, the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters, in the beginning of the creation; so the Spirit of God may act upon the minds of men many ways, and communicate Himself no more than when He acts upon an inanimate creature. For instance, He may excite thoughts in them, may assist their natural reason and understanding, or may assist other natural principles, and this without any union with the soul, but may act, as it were, as upon an external object. But as He acts in His holy influences and spiritual operations, He acts in a way of peculiar communication of Himself; so that the subject is thence denominated spiritual.

This spiritual and divine light does not consist in any impression made upon the imagination. It is no impression upon the mind, as tho one saw anything with the bodily eyes: it is no imagination or idea of an outward light or glory or any beauty of form or countenance, or a visible luster or brightness of any object. The imagination may be strongly imprest with such things; but this is not spiritual light. Indeed, when the mind has a lively discovery of spiritual things, and is greatly affected by the power of divine light, it may, and probably very commonly doth, much affect the imagination; so that impressions of an outward beauty or brightness may accompany those spiritual discoveries. But spiritual light is not that impression upon the imagination, but an exceeding different thing from it. Natural men may have lively impressions on their imaginations; and we can not determine but the devil, who transforms himself into an angel of light, may cause imaginations of an outward beauty, or visible glory, and of sounds and speeches, and other such things; but these are things of a vastly inferior nature to spiritual light.

This spiritual light is not the suggesting of any new truths or propositions not contained in the Word of God. This suggesting of new truths or doctrines to the mind, independent of any antecedent revelation of those propositions, either in word or writing,

is inspiration; such as the prophets and apostles had, and such as some enthusiasts pretend to. But this spiritual light that I am speaking of is quite a different thing from inspiration; it reveals no new doctrine, it suggests no new proposition to the mind, it teaches no new thing of God, or Christ, or another world, not taught in the Bible, but only gives a due apprehension of those things that are taught in the Word of God.

It is not every affecting view that men have of the things of religion that is this spiritual and divine light. Men by mere principles of nature are capable of being affected with things that have a special relation to religion as well as other things. A person by mere nature, for instance, may be liable to be affected with the story of Jesus Christ, and the sufferings He underwent, as well as by any other tragical story; he may be the more affected with it from the interest he conceives mankind to have in it; yea, he may be affected with it without believing it; as well as a man may be affected with what he reads in a romance, or sees acted in a stage play. He may be affected with a lively and eloquent description of many pleasant things that attend the state of the blest in heaven, as well as his imagination be entertained by a romantic description of the pleasantness of fairy-land, or the like. And that common belief of the truth of the things of

religion, that persons may have from education or otherwise, may help forward their affection. We read in Scripture of many that were greatly affected with things of a religious nature, who yet are there presented as wholly graceless, and many of them very ill men. A person therefore may have affecting views of religion, and yet be very destitute of spiritual light. Flesh and blood may be the author of this; one man may give another an affecting view of divine things but common assistance: but God alone can give a spiritual discovery of them.

But I proceed to show positively what this spiritual and divine light is.

And it may be thus described: a true sense of the divine excellency of the things revealed in the Word of God, and a conviction of the truth and reality of them thence arising.

This spiritual light primarily consists in the former of these—viz., a real sense and apprehension of the divine excellency of things revealed in the Word of God. A spiritual and saving conviction of the truth and reality of these things arises from such a sight of their divine excellency and glory; so that this conviction of their truth is an effect and natural consequence of this sight of their divine glory. There is therefore in this spiritual light,

1. A true sense of the divine and superlative excellency of the things of religion; a

real sense of the excellency of God and Jesus Christ, and of the work of redemption, and the ways and works of God revealed in the gospel. There is a divine and superlative glory in these things; an excellency that is of a vastly higher kind, and more sublime nature than in other things; a glory greatly distinguishing them from all that is earthly and temporal. He that is spiritually enlightened truly apprehends and sees it, or has a sense of it. He does not merely rationally believe that God is glorious, but he has a sense of the gloriousness of God in his heart. There is not only a rational belief that is holy, and that holiness is a good thing, but there is a sense of the loveliness of God's holiness. There is not only a speculative judging that God is gracious, but a sense how amiable God is upon that account, or a sense of the beauty of this divine attribute.

There is a twofold understanding or knowledge of good that God has made the mind of man capable of. The first, that which is merely speculative and notional; as when a person only speculatively judges that anything is, which, by the agreement of mankind, is called good or excellent, viz., that which is most to general advantage, and between which and a reward there is a suitableness, and the like. And the other is, that which consists in the sense of the heart: as when there is a sense of the beauty, amiable-

ness, or sweetness of a thing; so that the heart is sensible of pleasure and delight in the presence of the idea of it. In the former is exercised merely the speculative faculty, or the understanding, strictly so called, or as spoken of in distinction from the will or disposition of the soul. In the latter, the will, or inclination, or heart is mainly concerned.

Thus there is a difference between having an opinion that God is holy and gracious, and having a sense of the loveliness and beauty of that holiness and grace. There is a difference between having a rational judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness. A man may have the former that knows not how honey tastes; but a man can not have the latter unless he has an idea of the taste of honey in his mind. So there is a difference between believing that a person is beautiful and having a sense of his beauty. The former may be obtained by hearsay, but the latter only by seeing the countenance. There is a wide difference between mere speculative rational judging anything to be excellent, and having a sense of its sweetness and beauty. The former rests only in the head, speculation only is concerned in it; but the heart is concerned in the latter. When the heart is sensible of the beauty and amiableness of a thing, it necessarily feels pleasure in the apprehension. It is implied in a person's being heartily sensible of the

loveliness of a thing, that the idea of it is sweet and pleasant to his soul; which is a far different thing from having a rational opinion that it is excellent.

2. There arises from this sense of divine excellency of things contained in the word of God a conviction of the truth and reality of them; and that either directly or indirectly.

First, indirectly, and that two ways.

(1) As the prejudices that are in the heart, against the truth of divine things, are hereby removed; so that the mind becomes susceptive of the due force of rational arguments for their truth. The mind of man is naturally full of prejudices against the truth of divine things: it is full of enmity against the doctrines of the gospel; which is a disadvantage to those arguments that prove their truth, and causes them to lose their force upon the mind. But when a person has discovered to him the divine excellency of Christian doctrines, this destroys the enmity, removes those prejudices, and sanctifies the reason, and causes it to lie open to the force of arguments for their truth.

Hence was the different effect that Christ's miracles had to convince the disciples from what they had to convince the scribes and Pharisees. Not that they had a stronger reason, or had their reason more improved; but their reason was sanctified, and those blinding prejudices, that the scribes and

Pharisees were under, were removed by the sense they had of the excellency of Christ and His doctrine.

(2) It not only removes the hindrances of reason, but positively helps reason. It makes even the speculative notions the more lively. It engages the attention of the mind, with the more fixedness and intenseness to that kind of objects; which causes it to have a clearer view of them, and enables it more clearly to see their mutual relations, and occasions it to take more notice of them. The ideas themselves that otherwise are dim and obscure, are by this means imprest with the greater strength, and have a light cast upon them, so that the mind can better judge of them; as he that beholds the objects on the face of the earth, when the light of the sun is cast upon them, is under greater advantage to discern them in their true forms and mutual relations, than he that sees them in a dim starlight or twilight.

The mind having a sensibleness of the excellency of divine objects, dwells upon them with delight; and the powers of the soul are more awakened and enlivened to employ themselves in the contemplation of them, and exert themselves more fully and much more to the purpose. The beauty and sweetness of the objects draw on the faculties, and draw forth their exercises; so that reason itself is under far greater advantages for its proper

and free exercises, and to attain its proper end, free of darkness and delusion.

Secondly. A true sense of the divine excellency of these things is so superlative as more directly and immediately to convince of the truth of them; and that because the excellency of these things is so superlative. There is a beauty in them that is so divine and godlike, that it greatly and evidently distinguishes them from things merely human, or that men are the inventors and authors of; a glory that is so high and great, that when clearly seen, it commands assent to their divinity and reality. When there is an actual and lively discovery of this beauty and excellency, it will not allow of any such thought as that it is a human work, or the fruit of men's invention. This evidence that they who are spiritually enlightened have of the truth of the things of religion, is a kind of intuitive and immediate evidence. They believe the doctrines of God's word to be divine, because they see divinity in them; *i.e.*, they see a divine, and transcendent, and most evidently distinguishing glory in them; such a glory as, if clearly seen, does not leave room to doubt of their being of God, and not of men.

Such a conviction of the truth of religion as this, arising, these ways, from a sense of the divine excellency of them, is that true spiritual conviction that there is in saving

faith. And this original of it, is that by which it is most essentially distinguished from that common assent, which unregenerated men are capable of.

I proceed now to show how this light is immediately given by God, and not obtained by natural means.

1. It is not intended that the natural faculties are not made use of in it. The natural faculties are the subject of this light: and they are the subject in such a manner that they are not merely passive, but active in it; the acts and exercises of men's understanding are concerned and made use of in it. God, in letting in this light into the soul, deals with man according to his nature, or as a rational creature; and makes use of his human faculties. But yet this light is not the less immediately from God for that; tho the faculties are made use of, it is as the subject and not as the cause; and that acting of the faculties in it is not the cause, but is either implied in the thing itself (in the light that is imparted) or is the consequence of it; as the use that we make of our eyes in beholding various objects, when the sun arises, is not the cause of the light that discovers those objects to us.

2. It is not intended that outward means have no concern in this affair. As I have observed already, it is not in this affair, as it is in inspiration, where new truths are

suggested: for here is by this light only given a due apprehension of the same truths that are revealed in the word of God; and therefore it is not given without the word. The gospel is made use of in this affair: this light is the light of the glorious gospel of Christ. (II Cor. iv., 4.) The gospel is as a glass, by which this light is conveyed to us (I Cor. xiii., 12). Now we see through a glass.

3. When it is said that this light is given immediately by God, and not obtained by natural means, hereby is intended that it is given by God without making use of any means that operate by their own power, or a natural force. God makes use of means; but it is not as mediate causes to produce this effect. There are not truly any second causes of it; but it is produced by God immediately. The Word of God is no proper cause of this effect: it does not operate by any natural force in it. The Word of God is only made use of to convey to the mind the subject matter of this saving instruction, and this indeed it doth convey to us by natural force or influence. It conveys to our minds these and those doctrines; it is the cause of the notion of them in our heads, but not of the sense of the divine excellency of them in our hearts. Indeed, a person can not have spiritual light without the Word. But that does not argue that the Word properly causes the light. The mind can not see the excellency of any

doctrine unless that doctrine be first in the mind; but the seeing of the excellency of the doctrine may be immediately from the Spirit of God; tho the conveying of the doctrine or proposition itself may be by the Word. So that the notions that are the subject-matter of this light are conveyed to the mind by the Word of God; but that due sense of the heart, wherein this light formally consists, is immediately by the Spirit of God. As for instance, that notion that there is a Christ, and that Christ is holy and gracious, is conveyed to the mind by the Word of God; but the sense of the excellency of Christ by reason of that holiness and grace, is nevertheless immediately the work of the Holy Spirit.

This is the most excellent and divine wisdom that any creature is capable of. It is more excellent than any human learning; it is far more excellent than all the knowledge of the greatest philosophers or statesmen. Yea, the least glimpse of the glory of God in the face of Christ doth more exalt and ennoble the soul than all the knowledge of those that have the greatest speculative understanding in divinity without grace. This knowledge has the most noble object that is or can be, viz., the divine glory or excellency of God and Christ. The knowledge of these objects is that wherein consists the most excellent knowledge of the angels, yea, of God himself.

This knowledge is that which is above all

others sweet and joyful. Men have a great deal of pleasure in human knowledge, in studies of natural things; but this is nothing to that joy which arises from this divine light shining into the soul. This light gives a view of those that are immensely the most exquisitely beautiful, and capable of delighting the eye of the understanding. This spiritual light is the dawning of the light of glory in the heart. There is nothing so powerful as this to support persons in affliction, and to give the mind peace and brightness in this stormy and dark world.

This light is such as effectually influences the inclination, and changes the nature of the soul. It assimilates the human nature to the divine nature, and changes the soul into an image of the same glory that is beheld (II Cor. iii., 18), "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This knowledge will wean from the world, and raise the inclination to heavenly things. It will turn the heart to God as the fountain of good, and to choose him for the only portion. This light, and this only, will bring the soul to a saving close with Christ. It conforms the heart to the gospel, mortifies its enmity and opposition against the schemes of salvation therein revealed: it causes the heart to embrace the joyful tidings, and en-

tirely to adhere to, and acquiesce in the revelation of Christ as our Savior: it causes the whole soul to accord and symphonize with it, admitting it with entire credit and respect; cleaving to it with full inclination and affection; and it effectually disposes the soul to give up itself entirely to Christ.

This light, and this only, has its fruit in a universal holiness of life. No merely notional or speculative understanding of the doctrines of religion will ever bring us to this. But this light, as it reaches the bottom of the heart, and changes the nature, so it will effectually dispose to a universal obedience. It shows God's worthiness to be obeyed and served. It draws forth the heart in a sincere love to God, which is the only principle of a true, gracious, and universal obedience; and it convinces of the reality of those glorious rewards that God has promised to them that obey him.

WESLEY

GOD'S LOVE TO FALLEN MAN

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

JOHN WESLEY was born at Epworth rectory in Lincolnshire, England, in 1703. He was educated at Charterhouse school and in 1720 entered Christ Church College, Oxford, where he graduated in 1724. He was noted for his classical taste as well as for his religious fervor, and on being ordained deacon by Bishop Potter, of Oxford, he became his father's curate in 1727. Being recalled to Oxford to fulfil his duties as fellow of Lincoln he became the head of the Oxford "Methodists," as they were called. He had the characteristics of a great general, being systematic in his work and a lover of discipline, and established Methodism in London by his sermons at the Foundery. His speaking style suggested power in repose. His voice was clear and resonant, his countenance kindly, and his tone extremely moderate. His sermons were carefully written, altho not read in the pulpit. They moved others because he was himself moved. At an advanced age he preached several times a day, and traveled many miles on horseback. At seventy years of age he had published thirty octavo volumes. He composed hymns on horseback, and studied French and mathematics in spare hours, and was never a moment idle until his death, in 1791.

WESLEY

1703—1791

GOD'S LOVE TO FALLEN MAN

Not as the transgression, so is the free gift.—
Romans v., 15.

HOW EXCEEDINGLY common, and how bitter is the outcry against our first parent, for the mischief which he not only brought upon himself, but entailed upon his latest posterity! It was by his wilful rebellion against God "that sin entered into the world." "By one man's disobedience," as the apostle observes, the many, as many as were then in the loins of their forefathers, were made, or constituted sinners: not only deprived of the favor of God, but also of His image; of all virtue, righteousness, and true holiness, and sunk partly into the image of the devil, in pride, malice, and all other diabolical tempers; partly into the image of the brute, being fallen under the dominion of brutal passions and groveling appetites. Hence also death entered into the world, with all his forerunners and attendants; pain, sickness, and a whole train of uneasy as well as unholy passions and tempers.

"For all this we may thank Adam," has

been echoed down from generation to generation. The self-same charge has been repeated in every age and every nation where the oracles of God are known, in which alone this grand and important event has been discovered to the children of men. Has not your heart, and probably your lips too, joined in the general charge? How few are there of those who believe the Scriptural relation of the Fall of Man, and have not entertained the same thought concerning our first parent? severely condemning him, that, through wilful disobedience to the sole command of his Creator,

> Brought death into the world and all our wo.

Nay, it were well if the charge rested here: but it is certain it does not. It can not be denied that it frequently glances from Adam to his Creator. Have not thousands, even of those that are called Christians, taken the liberty to call His mercy, if not His justice also, into question, on this very account? Some indeed have done this a little more modestly, in an oblique and indirect manner: but others have thrown aside the mask, and asked, "Did not God foresee that Adam would abuse his liberty? And did He not know the baneful consequences which this must naturally have on all his posterity? And why then did He permit that disobedience? Was it not easy for the Almighty to have prevented it?"

He certainly did foresee the whole. This can not be denied. "For known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." And it was undoubtedly in His Power to prevent it; for He hath all power both in heaven and earth. But it was known to Him at the same time, that it was best upon the whole not to prevent it. He knew that, "not as the transgression, so is the free gift"; that the evil resulting from the former was not as the good resulting from the latter, not worthy to be compared with it. He saw that to permit the fall of the first man was far best for mankind in general; that abundantly more good than evil would accrue to the posterity of Adam by his fall; that if "sin abounded" thereby over all the earth, yet grace "would much more abound"; yea, and that to every individual of the human race, unless it was his own choice.

It is exceedingly strange that hardly anything has been written, or at least published, on this subject: nay, that it has been so little weighed or understood by the generality of Christians: especially considering that it is not a matter of mere curiosity, but a truth of the deepest importance; it being impossible, on any other principle,

> To assert a gracious Providence,
> And justify the ways of God with men:

and considering withal, how plain this im-

portant truth is, to all sensible and candid inquirers. May the Lover of men open the eyes of our understanding, to perceive clearly that by the fall of Adam mankind in general have gained a capacity,

First, of being more holy and happy on earth, and,

Secondly, of being more happy in heaven than otherwise they could have been.

And, first, mankind in general have gained by the fall of Adam a capacity of attaining more holiness and happiness on earth than it would have been possible for them to attain if Adam had not fallen. For if Adam had not fallen, Christ had not died. Nothing can be more clear than this: nothing more undeniable: the more thoroughly we consider the point, the more deeply shall we be convinced of it. Unless all the partakers of human nature had received that deadly wound in Adam it would not have been needful for the Son of God to take our nature upon Him. Do you not see that this was the very ground of His coming into the world? "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And thus death passed upon all" through him, "in whom all men sinned." (Rom. v., 12.) Was it not to remedy this very thing that "the Word was made flesh"? that "as in Adam all died, so in Christ all might be made alive"? Unless, then, many had been made sinners by the disobedience of one, by the

obedience of one many would not have been made righteous (ver. 18); so there would have been no room for that amazing display of the Son of God's love to mankind. There would have been no occasion for His "being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." It would not then have been said, to the astonishment of all the hosts of heaven, "God so loved the world," yea, the ungodly world, which had no thought or desire of returning to Him, "that he gave his Son" out of His bosom, His only begotten Son, to the end that "whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Neither could we then have said, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself"; or that He "made him to be sin," that is, a sin-offering "for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him." There would have been no such occasion for such "an advocate with the Father" as "Jesus Christ the Righteous"; neither for His appearing "at the right hand of God, to make intercession for us."

What is the necessary consequence of this? It is this: there could then have been no such thing as faith in God, thus loving the world, giving His only Son for us men, and for our salvation. There could have been no such thing as faith in the Son of God, as loving us and giving Himself for us. There could have been no faith in the Spirit of God, as

renewing the image of God in our hearts, as raising us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. Indeed, the whole privilege of justification by faith could have no existence; there could have been no redemption in the blood of Christ: neither could Christ have been "made of God unto us," "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, or redemption."

And the same grand blank which was in our faith, must likewise have been in our love. We might have loved the Author of our being, the Father of angels and men, as our Creator and Preserver: we might have said, "O Lord our Governor, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!" But we could not have loved Him under the nearest and dearest relation, as delivering up His Son for us all. We might have loved the Son of God, as being the "brightness of his Father's glory," the express image of His person (altho this ground seems to belong rather to the inhabitants of heaven than earth). But we could not have loved Him as "bearing our sins in his own body on the tree," and "by that one oblation of himself once offered, making a full oblation, sacrifice, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." We would not have been "made conformable to his death," nor have known "the power of his resurrection." We could not have loved the Holy Ghost as revealing to us the Father and the Son, as

opening the eyes of our understanding, bringing us out of darkness into His marvelous light, renewing the image of God in our soul, and sealing us unto the day of redemption. So that, in truth, what is now "in the sight of God, even the Father," not of fallible men "pure religion and undefiled," would then have had no being: inasmuch as it wholly depends on those grand principles, "By grace ye are saved through faith"; and "Jesus Christ is of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

We see then what unspeakable advantage we derive from the fall of our first parent, with regard to faith: faith both in God the Father, who spared not His own Son, His only Son, but wounded Him for our transgressions and bruised Him for our iniquities; and in God the Son, who poured out His soul for us transgressors, and washed us in His own blood. We see what advantage we derive therefrom with regard to the love of God, both of God the Father and God the Son. The chief ground of this love, as long as we remain in the body, is plainly declared by the apostle, "We love him, because he first loved us." But the greatest instance of His love had never been given if Adam had not fallen.

And as our faith, both in God the Father and the Son, receives an unspeakable increase,

if not its very being, from this grand event, as does also our love both of the Father and the Son: so does the love of our neighbor also, our benevolence to all mankind: which can not but increase in the same proportion with our faith and love of God. For who does not apprehend the force of that inference drawn by the loving apostle, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." If God so loved us—observe, the stress of the argument lies on this very point: so loved us! as to deliver up His only Son to die a curst death for our salvation. "Beloved, what manner of love is this," wherewith God hath loved us? So as to give His only Son! In glory equal with the Father: in majesty coeternal! What manner of love is this wherewith the only begotten Son of God hath loved us, as to empty Himself, as far as possible, of His eternal Godhead; as to divest Himself of that glory, which He had with the Father before the world began; as to take upon Him "the form of a servant, being found in fashion as a man"! And then to humble Himself still further, "being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"! If God so loved us, how ought we to love one another? But this motive to brotherly love had been totally wanting if Adam had not fallen. Consequently we could not then have loved one another in so high a degree as we may now. Nor could there have been that height

and depth in the command of our blest Lord. "As I have loved you, so love one another."

Such gainers may we be by Adam's fall, with regard both to the love of God and of our neighbor. But there is another grand point, which, tho little adverted to, deserves our deepest consideration. By that one act of our first parent, not only "sin entered into the world," but pain also, and was alike entailed on his whole posterity. And herein appeared, not only the justice, but the unspeakable goodness of God. For how much good does He continually bring out of this evil! How much holiness and happiness out of pain!

How innumerable are the benefits which God conveys to the children of men through the channel of sufferings! so that it might well be said, "What are termed afflictions in the language of men, are in the language of God styled blessings." Indeed, had there been no suffering in the world, a considerable part of religion, yea, and in some respects, the most excellent part, could have no place therein: since the very existence of it depends on our suffering: so that had there been no pain it could have had no being. Upon this foundation, even our suffering, it is evident all our passive graces are built; yea, the noblest of all Christian graces, love enduring all things. Here is the ground for resignation to God, enabling us to say from the heart, and

in every trying hour, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" And what a glorious spectacle is this? Did it not constrain even a heathen to cry out, "*Ecce spectaculum Deo dignum!* See a sight worthy of God: a good man struggling with adversity, and superior to it." Here is the ground for confidence in God, both with regard to what we feel, and with regard to what we should fear, were it not that our soul is calmly stayed on him. What room could there be for trust in God if there was no such thing as pain or danger? Who might not say then, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" It is by sufferings that our faith is tried, and, therefore, made more acceptable to God. It is in the day of trouble that we have occasion to say, "Tho he slay me, yet will I trust in him." And this is well pleasing to God, that we should own Him in the face of danger; in defiance of sorrow, sickness, pain, or death.

Again: Had there been neither natural nor moral evil in the world, what must have become of patience, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering? It is manifest they could have had no being: seeing all these have evil for their object. If, therefore, evil had never entered into the world, neither could these have had any place in it. For who could have

returned good for evil, had there been no evil-doer in the universe? How had it been possible, on that supposition, to overcome evil with good? Will you say, "But all these graces might have been divinely infused into the hearts of men?" Undoubtedly they might: but if they had, there would have been no use or exercise for them. Whereas in the present state of things we can never long want occasion to exercise them. And the more they are exercised, the more all our graces are strengthened and increased. And in the same proportion as our resignation, our confidence in God, our patience and fortitude, our meekness, gentleness, and long-suffering, together with our faith and love of God and man increase, must our happiness increase, even in the present world.

Yet again: As God's permission of Adam's fall gave all his posterity a thousand opportunities of suffering, and thereby of exercising all those passive graces which increase both their holiness and happiness, so it gives them opportunities of doing good in numberless instances, of exercising themselves in various good works, which otherwise could have had no being. And what exertions of benevolence, of compassion, of godlike mercy, had then been totally prevented! Who could then have said to the lover of men,

> Thy mind throughout my life be shown,
> While listening to the wretches' cry,

> The widow's or the orphan's groan;
> On mercy's wings I swiftly fly
> The poor and needy to relieve;
> Myself, my all, for them to give?

It is the just observation of a benevolent man,

> ——All worldly joys are less,
> Than that one joy of doing kindnesses.

Surely in keeping this commandment, if no other, there is great reward. "As we have time, let us do good unto all men;" good of every kind and in every degree. Accordingly the more good we do (other circumstances being equal), the happier we shall be. The more we deal our bread to the hungry, and cover the naked with garments; the more we relieve the stranger, and visit them that are sick or in prison; the more kind offices we do to those that groan under the various evils of human life; the more comfort we receive even in the present world; the greater the recompense we have in our own bosom.

To sum up what has been said under this head: As the more holy we are upon earth, the more happy we must be (seeing there is an inseparable connection between holiness and happiness); as the more good we do to others, the more of present reward rebounds into our own bosom: even as our sufferings for God lead us to rejoice in Him "with joy unspeakable and full of glory"; therefore, the fall of Adam, first, by giving us an op-

portunity of being far more holy; secondly, by giving us the occasions of doing innumerable good works, which otherwise could not have been done; and, thirdly, by putting it into our power to suffer for God, whereby "the spirit of glory and of God rests upon us": may be of such advantage to the children of men, even in the present life, as they will not thoroughly comprehend till they attain life everlasting.

It is then we shall be enabled fully to comprehend not only the advantages which accrue at the present time to the sons of men by the fall of their first parent, but the infinitely greater advantages which they may reap from it in eternity. In order to form some conception of this, we may remember the observation of the apostle, "As one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." The most glorious stars will undoubtedly be those who are the most holy; who bear most of that image of God wherein they were created. The next in glory to these will be those who have been most abundant in good works: and next to them, those that have suffered most, according to the will of God. But what advantages in every one of these respects will the children of God receive in heaven, by God's permitting the introduction of pain upon earth, in consequence of sin? By occasion of this they attained many holy tempers, which otherwise

could have had no being: resignation to God, confidence in him in times of trouble and danger, patience, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, and the whole train of passive virtues. And on account of this superior holiness they will then enjoy superior happiness. Again: every one will then "receive his own reward, according to his own labor." Every individual will be "rewarded according to his work." But the Fall gave rise to innumerable good works, which could otherwise never have existed, such as ministering to the necessities of the saints, yea, relieving the distrest in every kind. And hereby innumerable stars will be added to their eternal crown. Yet again: there will be an abundant reward in heaven, for suffering as well as for doing, the will of God: "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Therefore that event, which occasioned the entrance of suffering into the world, has thereby occasioned to all the children of God, an increase of glory to all eternity. For altho the sufferings themselves will be at an end: altho

> The pain of life shall then be o'er,
> The anguish and distracting care;
> The sighing grief shall weep no more;
> And sin shall never enter there:—

yet the joys occasioned thereby shall never

end, but flow at God's right hand for evermore.

There is one advantage more that we reap from Adam's fall, which is not unworthy our attention. Unless in Adam all had died, being in the loins of their first parent, every descendant of Adam, every child of man, must have personally answered for himself to God: it seems to be a necessary consequence of this, that if he had once fallen, once violated any command of God, there would have been no possibility of his rising again; there was no help, but he must have perished without remedy. For that covenant knew not to show mercy: the word was, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Now who would not rather be on the footing he is now; under a covenant of mercy? Who would wish to hazard a whole eternity upon one stake? Is it not infinitely more desirable, to be in a state wherein, tho encompassed with infirmities, yet we do not run such a desperate risk, but if we fall, we may rise again? Wherein we may say,

> My trespass is grown up to heaven!
> But, far above the skies,
> In Christ abundantly forgiven,
> I see Thy mercies rise!

In Christ! Let me entreat every serious person, once more to fix his attention here. All that has been said, all that can be said, on these subjects, centers in this point. The

fall of Adam produced the death of Christ! Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! Yea,

> Let earth and heaven agree,
> Angels and men be joined,
> To celebrate with me
> The Saviour of mankind;
> To adore the all-atoning Lamb,
> And bless the sound of Jesus' name!

If God had prevented the fall of man, the Word had never been made flesh: nor had we ever "seen his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." Those mysteries had never been displayed, "which the very angels desire to look into." Methinks this consideration swallows up all the rest, and should never be out of our thoughts. Unless "by one man, judgment had come upon all men to condemnation," neither angels nor men could ever have known "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

See then, upon the whole, how little reason we have to repine at the fall of our first parent, since herefrom we may derive such unspeakable advantages, both in time and eternity. See how small pretense there is for questioning the mercy of God in permitting that event to take place, since therein, mercy, by infinite degrees, rejoices over judgment! Where, then, is the man that presumes to blame God for not preventing Adam's sin? Should we not rather bless Him from the ground of the heart, for therein laying

the grand scheme of man's redemption, and making way for that glorious manifestation of His wisdom, holiness, justice, and mercy? If indeed God had decreed before the foundation of the world that millions of men should dwell in everlasting burnings, because Adam sinned, hundreds or thousands of years before they had a being, I know not who could thank him for this, unless the devil and his angels: seeing, on this supposition, all those millions of unhappy spirits would be plunged into hell by Adam's sin, without any possible advantage from it. But, blest be God, this is not the case. Such a decree never existed. On the contrary, every one born of a woman may be an unspeakable gainer thereby; and none ever was or can be a loser, but by his own choice.

We see here a full answer to that plausible account "of the origin of evil," published to the world some years since, and supposed to be unanswerable: that it "necessarily resulted from the nature of matter, which God was not able to alter." It is very kind in this sweet-tongued orator to make an excuse for God! But there is really no occasion for it: God hath answered for Himself. He made man in His own image, a spirit endued with understanding and liberty. Man abusing that liberty, produced evil, brought sin and pain into the world. This God permitted, in order to a fuller manifestation of His wisdom, jus-

tice, and mercy, by bestowing on all who would receive it an infinitely greater happiness than they could possibly have attained if Adam had not fallen.

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Altho a thousand particulars of His judgments, and of His ways are unsearchable to us, and past our finding out, yet we may discern the general scheme running through time into eternity. "According to the council of his own will," the plan He had laid before the foundation of the world, He created the parent of all mankind in His own image. And He permitted all men to be made sinners by the disobedience of this one man, that, by the obedience of One, all who receive the free gift may be infinitely holier and happier to all eternity!

WHITEFIELD

THE METHOD OF GRACE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

George Whitefield, evangelist and leader of Calvinistic Methodists, who has been called the Demosthenes of the pulpit, was born at Gloucester, England, in 1714. He was an impassioned pulpit orator of the popular type, and his power over immense congregations was largely due to his histrionic talent and his exquisitely modulated voice, which has been described as "an organ, a flute, a harp, all in one," and which at times became stentorian. He had a most expressive face, and altho he squinted, in grace and significance of gesture he knew perfectly how to "suit the action to the word." But he had not the style or scholarship of Wesley, and his printed sermons do not fully bear out his reputation. Whitefield died in 1770.

WHITEFIELD

1714—1770

THE METHOD OF GRACE

They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.—Jeremiah vi., 14.

As God can send a nation or people no greater blessing than to give them faithful, sincere, and upright ministers, so the greatest curse that God can possibly send upon a people in this world is to give them over to blind, unregenerate, carnal, lukewarm, and unskilful guides. And yet, in all ages, we find that there have been many wolves in sheep's clothing, many that daubed with untempered mortar, that prophesied smoother things than God did allow. As it was formerly, so it is now; there are many that corrupt the word of God and deal deceitfully with it. It was so in a special manner in the prophet Jeremiah's time; and he, faithful to his Lord, faithful to that God who employed him, did not fail from time to time to open his mouth against them, and to bear a noble testimony to the honor of that God in whose name he from time to time spake. If you will read his prophecy, you will find that none spake more against such ministers

than Jeremiah, and here especially in the chapter out of which the text is taken he speaks very severely against them. He charges them with several crimes; particularly he charges them with covetousness: "For," says he, in the thirteenth verse, "from the least of them even to the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely."

And then, in the words of the text, in a more special manner he exemplifies how they had dealt falsely, how they had behaved treacherously to poor souls: says he, "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace." The prophet, in the name of God, had been denouncing war against the people; he had been telling them that their house should be left desolate, and that the Lord would certainly visit the land with war. "Therefore," says he, in the eleventh verse, "I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in; I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together; for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days. And their houses shall be turned unto others, with their fields and wives together; for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord."

The prophet gives a thundering message, that they might be terrified and have some convictions and inclinations to repent; but it seems that the false prophets, the false priests, went about stifling people's convictions, and when they were hurt or a little terrified, they were for daubing over the wound, telling them that Jeremiah was but an enthusiastic preacher, that there could be no such thing as war among them, and saying to people, Peace, peace, be still, when the prophet told them there was no peace.

The words, then, refer primarily unto outward things, but I verily believe have also a further reference to the soul, and are to be referred to those false teachers who, when people were under conviction of sin, when people were beginning to look toward heaven, were for stifling their convictions and telling them they were good enough before. And, indeed, people generally love to have it so; our hearts are exceedingly deceitful and desperately wicked; none but the eternal God knows how treacherous they are.

How many of us cry, Peace, peace, to our souls, when there is no peace! How many are there who are now settled upon their lees, that now think they are Christians, that now flatter themselves that they have an interest in Jesus Christ; whereas if we come to examine their experiences we shall find that their peace is but a peace of the devil's making—

it is not a peace of God's giving—it is not a peace that passeth human understanding.

It is a matter, therefore, of great importance, my dear hearers, to know whether we may speak peace to our hearts. We are all desirous of peace; peace is an unspeakable blessing; how can we live without peace? And, therefore, people from time to time must be taught how far they must go and what must be wrought in them before they can speak peace to their hearts. This is what I design at present, that I may deliver my soul, that I may be free from the blood of all those to whom I preach—that I may not fail to declare the whole counsel of God. I shall, from the words of the text, endeavor to show you what you must undergo and what must be wrought in you before you can speak peace to your hearts.

But before I come directly to this give me leave to premise a caution or two.

And the first is, that I take it for granted you believe religion to be an inward thing; you believe it to be a work of the heart, a work wrought in the soul by the power of the Spirit of God. If you do not believe this, you do not believe your Bibles. If you do not believe this, tho you have got your Bibles in your hand, you hate the Lord Jesus Christ in your heart; for religion is everywhere represented in Scripture as the work of God in the heart. "The kingdom of God is within

us,'' says our Lord; and, ''he is not a Christian who is one outwardly; but he is a Christian who is one inwardly.'' If any of you place religion in outward things, I shall not perhaps please you this morning; you will understand me no more when I speak of the work of God upon a poor sinner's heart than if I were talking in an unknown tongue.

I would further premise a caution, that I would by no means confine God to one way of acting. I would by no means say that all persons, before they come to have a settled peace in their hearts, are obliged to undergo the same degrees of conviction. No; God has various ways of bringing His children home; His sacred Spirit bloweth when, and where, and how it listeth. But, however, I will venture to affirm this: that before ever you can speak peace to your heart, whether by shorter or longer continuance of your convictions, whether in a more pungent or in a more gentle way, you must undergo what I shall hereafter lay down in the following discourse.

First, then, before you can speak peace to your hearts, you must be made to see, made to feel, made to weep over, made to bewail, your actual transgressions against the law of God. According to the covenant of works, ''the soul that sinneth it shall die''; curst is that man, be he what he may, be he who he may, that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.

We are not only to do some things, but we are to do all things, and we are to continue to do so, so that the least deviation from the moral law, according to the covenant of works, whether in thought, word, or deed, deserves eternal death at the hand of God. And if one evil thought, if one evil word, if one evil action deserves eternal damnation, how many hells, my friends, do every one of us deserve whose whole lives have been one continued rebellion against God! Before ever, therefore, you can speak peace to your hearts, you must be brought to see, brought to believe, what a dreadful thing it is to depart from the living God.

And now, my dear friends, examine your hearts, for I hope you came hither with a design to have your souls made better. Give me leave to ask you, in the presence of God, whether you know the time, and if you do not know exactly the time, do you know there was a time when God wrote bitter things against you, when the arrows of the Almighty were within you? Was ever the remembrance of your sins grievous to you? Was the burden of your sins intolerable to your thoughts? Did you ever see that God's wrath might justly fall upon you, on account of your actual transgressions against God? Were you ever in all your life sorry for your sins? Could you ever say, My sins are gone over my head as a burden too heavy for me to bear? Did

you ever experience any such thing as this? Did ever any such thing as this pass between God and your soul? If not, for Jesus Christ's sake, do not call yourselves Christians; you may speak peace to your hearts, but there is no peace. May the Lord awaken you, may the Lord convert you, may the Lord give you peace, if it be His will, before you go home!

But, further, you may be convinced of your actual sins, so as to be made to tremble, and yet you may be strangers to Jesus Christ, you may have no true work of grace upon your hearts. Before ever, therefore, you can speak peace to your hearts, conviction must go deeper; you must not only be convinced of your actual transgressions against the law of God, but likewise of the foundation of all your transgressions. And what is that? I mean original sin, that original corruption each of us brings into the world with us, which renders us liable to God's wrath and damnation. There are many poor souls that think themselves fine reasoners, yet they pretend to say there is no such thing as original sin; they will charge God with injustice in imputing Adam's sin to us; altho we have got the mark of the beast and of the devil upon us, yet they tell us we are not born in sin. Let them look abroad and see the disorders in it, and think, if they can, if this is the paradise in which God did put man. No! everything in the world is out of order.

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I have often thought, when I was abroad, that if there were no other arguments to prove original sin, the rising of wolves and tigers against man, nay, the barking of a dog against us, is a proof of original sin. Tigers and lions durst not rise against us unless it were as much as to say, "You have sinned against God, and we take up our master's quarrel." If we look inwardly, we shall see enough of lusts and man's temper contrary to the temper of God. There is pride, malice, and revenge in all our hearts; and this temper can not come from God; it comes from our first parent, Adam, who, after he fell from God, fell out of God into the devil.

However, therefore, some people may deny this, yet when conviction comes, all carnal reasonings are battered down immediately, and the poor soul begins to feel and see the fountain from which all the polluted streams do flow. When the sinner is first awakened, he begins to wonder, How came I to be so wicked? The Spirit of God then strikes in, and shows that he has no good thing in him by nature; then he sees that he is altogether gone out of the way, that he is altogether become abominable, and the poor creature is made to lie down at the foot of the throne of God and to acknowledge that God would be just to damn him, just to cut him off, tho he never had committed one actual sin in his life.

Did you ever feel and experience this, any of you—to justify God in your damnation—to own that you are by nature children of wrath, and that God may justly cut you off, tho you never actually had offended Him in all your life? If you were ever truly convicted, if your hearts were ever truly cut, if self were truly taken out of you, you would be made to see and feel this. And if you have never felt the weight of original sin, do not call yourselves Christians. I am verily persuaded original sin is the greatest burden of a true convert; this ever grieves the regenerate soul, the sanctified soul. The indwelling of sin in the heart is the burden of a converted person; it is the burden of a true Christian. He continually cries out: "Oh! who will deliver me from this body of death, this indwelling corruption in my heart?" This is that which disturbs a poor soul most. And, therefore, if you never felt this inward corruption, if you never saw that God might justly curse you for it, indeed, my dear friends, you may speak peace to your hearts, but I fear, nay, I know, there is no true peace.

Further, before you can speak peace to your hearts you must not only be troubled for the sins of your life, the sins of your nature, but likewise for the sins of your best duties and performances.

When a poor soul is somewhat awakened by the terrors of the Lord, then the poor

creature, being born under the covenant of works, flies directly to a covenant of works again. And as Adam and Eve hid themselves among the trees of the garden and sewed fig-leaves together to cover their nakedness, so the poor sinner when awakened flies to his duties and to his performances, to hide himself from God, and goes to patch up a righteousness of his own. Says he, I will be mighty good now—I will reform—I will do all I can; and then certainly Jesus Christ will have mercy on me. But before you can speak peace to your heart you must be brought to see that God may damn you for the best prayer you ever put up; you must be brought to see that all your duties—all your righteousness—as the prophet elegantly expresses it—put them all together, are so far from recommending you to God, are so far from being any motive and inducement to God to have mercy on your poor soul, that He will see them to be filthy rags, a menstruous cloth—that God hates them, and can not away with them, if you bring them to Him in order to recommend you to His favor.

My dear friends, what is there in our performance to recommend us unto God? Our persons are in an unjustified state by nature; we deserve to be damned ten thousand times over; and what must our performance be? We can do no good thing by nature: "They that are in the flesh can not please God."

You may do things materially good, but you can not do a thing formally and rightly good; because nature can not act above itself. It is impossible that a man who is unconverted can act for the glory of God; he can not do anything in faith, and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

After we are renewed, yet we are renewed but in part, indwelling sin continues in us, there is a mixture of corruption in every one of our duties, so that after we are converted, were Jesus Christ only to accept us according to our works, our works would damn us, for we can not put up a prayer but it is far from that perfection which the moral law requireth. I do not know what you may think, but I can say that I can not pray but I sin—I can not preach to you or any others but I sin—I can do nothing without sin; and, as one expresseth it, my repentance wants to be repented of, and my tears to be washed in the precious blood of my dear Redeemer.

Our best duties are so many splendid sins. Before you can speak peace to your heart you must not only be sick of your original and actual sin, but you must be made sick of your righteousness, of all your duties and performances. There must be a deep conviction before you can be brought out of your self-righteousness; it is the last idol taken out of our heart. The pride of our heart will not let us submit to the righteousness of Jesus Christ. But if you

never felt that you had no righteousness of your own, if you never felt the deficiency of your own righteousness, you can not come to Jesus Christ.

There are a great many now who may say, Well, we believe all this; but there is a great difference betwixt talking and feeling. Did you ever feel the want of a dear Redeemer? Did you ever feel the want of Jesus Christ, upon the account of the deficiency of your own righteousness? And can you now say from your heart Lord, thou mayest justly damn me for the best duties that ever I did perform? If you are not thus brought out of self, you may speak peace to yourselves, but yet there is no peace.

But then, before you can speak peace to your souls, there is one particular sin you must be greatly troubled for, and yet I fear there are few of you think what it is; it is the reigning, the damning sin of the Christian world, and yet the Christian world seldom or never think of it. And pray what is that?

It is what most of you think you are not guilty of—and that is, the sin of unbelief. Before you can speak peace to your heart, you must be troubled for the unbelief of your heart. But can it be supposed that any of you are unbelievers here in this churchyard, that are born in Scotland, in a reformed country, that go to church every Sabbath? Can any of you that receive the sacrament

once a year—oh, that it were administered oftener!—can it be supposed that you who had tokens for the sacrament, that you who keep up family prayer, that any of you do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?

I appeal to your own hearts, if you would not think me uncharitable, if I doubted whether any of you believed in Christ: and yet, I fear upon examination, we should find that most of you have not so much faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the devil himself. I am persuaded that the devil believes more of the Bible than most of us do. He believes the divinity of Jesus Christ; that is more than many who call themselves Christians do; nay, he believes and trembles, and that is more than thousands amongst us do.

My friends, we mistake a historical faith for a true faith, wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God. You fancy you believe because you believe there is such a book as we call the Bible—because you go to church; all this you may do and have no true faith in Christ. Merely to believe there was such a person as Christ, merely to believe there is a book called the Bible, will do you no good, more than to believe there was such a man as Cæsar or Alexander the Great. The Bible is a sacred depository. What thanks have we to give to God for these lively oracles! But yet we may have these and not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

My dear friends, there must be a principle wrought in the heart by the Spirit of the living God. Did I ask you how long it is since you believed in Jesus Christ, I suppose most of you would tell me you believed in Jesus Christ as long as ever you remember—you never did misbelieve. Then, you could not give me a better proof that you never yet believed in Jesus Christ, unless you were sanctified early, as from the womb; for they that otherwise believe in Christ know there was a time when they did not believe in Jesus Christ.

You say you love God with all your heart, soul, and strength. If I were to ask you how long it is since you loved God, you would say, As long as you can remember; you never hated God, you know no time when there was enmity in your heart against God. Then, unless you were sanctified very early, you never loved God in your life.

My dear friends, I am more particular in this, because it is a most deceitful delusion, whereby so many people are carried away, that they believe already. Therefore it is remarked of Mr. Marshall, giving account of his experiences, that he had been working for life, and he had ranged all his sins under the ten commandments, and then, coming to a minister, asked him the reason why he could not get peace. The minister looked to his catalog. "Away," says he, "I do not find one

word of the sin of unbelief in all your catalog." It is the peculiar work of the Spirit of God to convince us of our unbelief—that we have got no faith. Says Jesus Christ, "I will send the comforter; and when he is come, he will reprove the world" of the sin of unbelief; "of sin," says Christ, "because they believe not on me."

Now, my dear friends, did God ever show you that you had no faith? Were you ever made to bewail a hard heart of unbelief? Was it ever the language of your heart, Lord, give me faith; Lord, enable me to lay hold on Thee; Lord, enable me to call Thee my Lord and my God? Did Jesus Christ ever convince you in this manner? Did he ever convince you of your inability to close with Christ, and make you to cry out to God to give you faith? If not, do not speak peace to your heart. May the Lord awaken you and give you true, solid peace before you go hence and be no more!

Once more, then: before you can speak peace to your heart, you must not only be convinced of your actual and original sin, the sins of your own righteousness, the sin of unbelief, but you must be enabled to lay hold upon the perfect righteousness, the all-sufficient righteousness, of the Lord Jesus Christ; you must lay hold by faith on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and then you shall have peace. "Come," says Jesus, "unto

me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

This speaks encouragement to all that are weary and heavy laden; but the promise of rest is made to them only upon their coming and believing, and taking Him to be their God and their all. Before we can ever have peace with God we must be justified by faith through our Lord Jesus Christ, we must be enabled to apply Christ to our hearts, we must have Christ brought home to our souls, so as His righteousness may be made our righteousness, so as His merits may be imputed to our souls. My dear friends, were you ever married to Jesus Christ? Did Jesus Christ ever give Himself to you? Did you ever close with Christ by a lively faith, so as to feel Christ in your hearts, so as to hear Him speaking peace to your souls? Did peace ever flow in upon your hearts like a river? Did you ever feel that peace that Christ spoke to His disciples? I pray God he may come and speak peace to you. These things you must experience.

I am now talking of the invisible realities of another world, of inward religion, of the work of God upon a poor sinner's heart. I am now talking of a matter of great importance, my dear hearers; you are all concerned in it, your souls are concerned in it, your eternal salvation is concerned in it. You may be all at peace, but perhaps the devil has

lulled you asleep into a carnal lethargy and security, and will endeavor to keep you there till he gets you to hell, and there you will be awakened; but it will be dreadful to be awakened and find yourselves so fearfully mistaken when the great gulf is fixt, when you will be calling to all eternity for a drop of water to cool your tongue and shall not obtain it.

BLAIR

THE HOUR AND THE EVENT OF ALL TIME

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Hugh Blair, the preacher and divine, was born in Edinburgh, 1718. He entered the university of his native town and graduated in 1739. Two years later he was licensed to preach; he was ordained minister of Colossie, Fife, in 1742, but returned to Edinburgh and in 1762 was made regius professor of rhetoric and belles-lettres to the university. He became a member of the great literary club, the Poker, where he associated with Hume, A. Carlyle, Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith and others, and enjoyed a high reputation as a preacher and critic. The lectures he published on style are elegantly written, but weak in thought, and his sermons share the same fault. They are composed with great care, and sometimes a single discourse cost him a week's labor, but they are formal and destitute of feeling and sometimes even affected in style. Blair was notable for fastidiousness in dress and manners, and took very seriously the reputation he was given for refinement and common-sense as one of the moderate divines. He died in 1800.

BLAIR

1718—1800

THE HOUR AND THE EVENT OF ALL TIME

Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father! the hour is come.—John xvii., 1.

THESE were the words of our blest Lord on a memorable occasion. The feast of the Passover drew nigh, at which He knew that He was to suffer. The night was arrived wherein He was to be delivered into the hands of His enemies. He had spent the evening in conference with His disciples, like a dying father in the midst of his family, mingling consolations with His last instructions. When He had ended His discourse to them, "he lifted up his eyes to heaven," and with the words which I have now read, began that solemn prayer of intercession for the Church, which closed His ministry. Immediately after, He went forth with His disciples into the garden of Gethsemane and surrendered Himself to those who came to apprehend Him.

Such was the situation of our Lord at the time of His pronouncing these words. He

saw His mission on the point of being accomplished. He had the prospect full before Him of all that He was about to suffer—"Father! the hour is come." What hour? An hour the most critical, the most pregnant with great events, since hours had begun to be numbered, since time had begun to run. It was the hour at which the Son of God was to terminate the labors of His important life by a death still more important and illustrious; the hour of atoning, by His sufferings, for the guilt of mankind; the hour of accomplishing prophecies, types, and symbols, which had been carried on through a series of ages; the hour of concluding the old and of introducing into the world the new dispensation of religion; the hour of His triumphing over the world, and death, and hell; the hour of His creating that spiritual kingdom which is to last forever. Such is the hour. Such are the events which you are to commemorate in the sacrament of our Lord's Supper.

I. This was the hour in which Christ was glorified by His sufferings. The whole of His life had discovered much real greatness under a mean appearance. Through the cloud of His humiliation, His native luster often broke forth; but never did it shine so bright as in this last, this trying hour. It was indeed the hour of distress and of blood. He knew it to be such; and when He uttered the words of the text, He had before His eyes

the executioner and the cross, the scourge, the nails, and the spear. But by prospects of this nature His soul was not to be overcome. It is distress which ennobles every great character; and distress was to glorify the Son of God. He was now to teach all mankind by His example, how to suffer and to die. He was to stand forth before His enemies as the faithful witness of the truth, justifying by His behavior the character which He assumed, and sealing by His blood the doctrines which He taught.

What magnanimity in all His words and actions on this great occasion! The court of Herod, the judgment-hall of Pilate, the hill of Calvary, were so many theaters prepared for His displaying all the virtues of a constant and patient mind. When led forth to suffer, the first voice which we hear from Him is a generous lamentation over the fate of His unfortunate tho guilty country; and to the last moment of His life we behold Him in possession of the same gentle and benevolent spirit. No upbraiding, no complaining expression escaped from His lips during the long and painful approaches of a cruel death. He betrayed no symptom of a weak or a vulgar, of a discomposed or impatient mind. With the utmost attention of filial tenderness He committed His aged mother to the care of His beloved disciple. With all the dignity of a sovereign He conferred pardon on a fel-

low-sufferer. With a greatness of mind beyond example, He spent His last moments in apologies and prayers for those who were shedding His blood.

By wonders in heaven and wonders on earth was this hour distinguished. All nature seemed to feel it; and the dead and the living bore witness of its importance. The veil of the temple was rent in twain. The earth shook. There was darkness over all the land. The graves were opened, and "many who slept arose, and went into the holy city." Nor were these the only prodigies of this awful hour. The most hardened hearts were subdued and changed. The judge who, in order to gratify the multitude, passed sentence against Him, publicly attested His innocence. The Roman centurion who presided at the execution, "glorified God," and acknowledged the Sufferer to be more than man. "After he saw the things which had passed, he said, Certainly this was a righteous person: truly this was the Son of God." The Jewish malefactor who was crucified with Him addrest Him as a king, and implored His favor. Even the crowd of insensible spectators, who had come forth as to a common spectacle, and who began with clamors and insults, "returned home smiting their breasts." Look back on the heroes, the philosophers, the legislators of old. View them in their last moments. Recall

every circumstance which distinguished their departure from the world. Where can you find such an assemblage of high virtues, and of great events, as concurred at the death of Christ? Where so many testimonials given to the dignity of the dying person by earth and by heaven?

II. This was the hour in which Christ atoned for the sins of mankind, and accomplished our eternal redemption. It was the hour when that great sacrifice was offered up, the efficacy of which reaches back to the first transgression of man, and extends forward to the end of time; the hour when, from the cross, as from a high altar, the blood was flowing which washed away the guilt of the nations.

This awful dispensation of the Almighty contains mysteries which are beyond the discovery of man. It is one of those things into which "the angels desire to look." What has been revealed to us is, that the death of Christ was the interposition of heaven for preventing the ruin of human kind. We know that under the government of God misery is the natural consequence of guilt. After rational creatures had, by their criminal conduct, introduced disorder into the divine kingdom, there was no ground to believe that by their penitence and prayers alone they could prevent the destruction which threatened them. The prevalence of propitiatory sacrifices throughout the earth proclaims it to be the

general sense of mankind that mere repentance was not of sufficient avail to expiate sin or to stop its penal effects. By the constant allusions which are carried on in the New Testament to the sacrifices under the law, as pre-signifying a great atonement made by Christ, and by the strong expressions which are used in describing the effects of His death, the sacred writers show, as plainly as language allows, that there was an efficacy in His sufferings far beyond that of mere example and instruction. The nature and extent of that efficacy we are unable as yet fully to trace. Part we are capable of beholding; and the wisdom of what we behold we have reason to adore. We discern, in this plan of redemption, the evil of sin strongly exhibited and the justice of the divine government awfully exemplified, in Christ suffering for sinners. But let us not imagine that our present discoveries unfold the whole influence of the death of Christ. It is connected with causes into which we can not penetrate. It produces consequences too extensive for us to explore. "God's thoughts are not as our thoughts." In all things we "see only in part"; and here, if anywhere, we see also "as through a glass, darkly."

This, however, is fully manifest, that redemption is one of the most glorious works of the Almighty. If the hour of the creation of the world was great and illustrious, that

hour when, from the dark and formless mass, this fair system of nature arose at the divine command, when "the morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," no less illustrious is the hour of the restoration of the world; the hour when, from condemnation and misery, it emerged into happiness and peace. With less external majesty it was attended; but it is, on that account, the more wonderful that, under an appearance so simple, such great events were covered.

III. In this hour the long series of prophecies, visions, types, and figures were accomplished. This was the center in which they all met: this the point toward which they had tended and verged, throughout the course of so many generations. You behold the law and the prophets standing, if we may speak so, at the foot of the cross, and doing homage. You behold Moses and Aaron bearing the Ark of the Covenant; David and Elijah presenting the oracle of testimony. You behold all the priests and sacrifices, all the rites and ordinances, all the types and symbols assembled together to receive their consummation. Without the death of Christ, the worship and ceremonies of the law would have remained a pompous, but unmeaning, institution. In the hour when He was crucified, "the book with the seven seals" was opened. Every rite assumed its significancy; every prediction

met its event; every symbol displayed its correspondence.

The dark and seemingly ambiguous method of conveying important discoveries under figures and emblems was not peculiar to the sacred books. The spirit of God in presignifying the death of Christ, adopted that plan, according to which the whole knowledge of those early ages was propagated through the world. Under the veil of mysterious allusion, all wisdom was then concealed. From the sensible world images were everywhere borrowed to describe things unseen. More was understood to be meant than was openly exprest. By enigmatical rites the priests communicated his doctrines; by parables and allegories the philosopher instructed his disciples; even the legislator, by figurative sayings, commanded the reverence of the people. Agreeably to this prevailing mode of instruction, the whole dispensation of the Old Testament was so conducted as to be the shadow and figure of a spiritual system. Every remarkable event, every distinguished personage, under the law, is interpreted in the New Testament, as bearing reference to the hour of which we treat. If Isaac was laid upon the altar as an innocent victim; if David was driven from his throne by the wicked, and restored by the hand of God; if the brazen serpent was lifted up to heal the people; if the rock was smitten by Moses, to furnish drink

in the wilderness; all were types of Christ and alluded to His death.

In predicting the same event the language of ancient prophecy was magnificent, but seemingly contradictory: for it foretold a Messiah, who was to be at once a sufferer and a conquerer. The Star was to come out of Jacob, and the Branch to spring from the stem of Jesse. The Angel of the Covenant, the desire of all nations, was to come suddenly to His temple; and to Him was to be "the gathering of the people." Yet, at the same time, He was to be "despised and rejected of men"; He was to be "taken from prison and from judgment," and to be "led as a lamb to the slaughter." Tho He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," yet "the Gentiles were to come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising." In the hour when Christ died, those prophetical riddles were solved: those seeming contradictions were reconciled. The obscurity of oracles, and the ambiguity of types vanished. The "sun of righteousness" rose; and, together with the dawn of religion those shadows passed away.

IV. This was the hour of the abolition of the law, and the introduction of the gospel; the hour of terminating the old and of beginning the new dispensation of religious knowledge and worship throughout the earth. Viewed in this light, it forms the most august

era which is to be found in the history of mankind. When Christ was suffering on the cross, we are informed by one of the evangelists that He said, "I thirst"; and that they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it to His mouth. "After he had tasted the vinegar, knowing that all things were now accomplished, and the Scriptures fulfilled, he said, It is finished"; that is, this offered draft of vinegar was the last circumstance predicted by an ancient prophet that remained to be fulfilled. The vision and the prophecy are now sealed: the Mosaic dispensation is closed. "And he bowed his head and gave up the ghost."

"It is finished." When He uttered these words He changed the state of the universe. At that moment the law ceased, and the gospel commenced. This was the ever memorable point of time which separated the old and the new worlds from each other. On one side of the point of separation you behold the law, with its priests, its sacrifices, and its rites, retiring from sight. On the other side you behold the gospel, with its simple and venerable institutions, coming forward into view. Significantly was the veil of the temple rent in this hour; for the glory then departed from between the cherubim. The legal high priest delivered up his urim and thummim, his breast-plate, his robes, and his incense: and Christ stood forth as the great high

priest of all succeeding generations. By that one sacrifice which He now offered, He abolished sacrifices forever. Altars on which the fire had blazed for ages, were now to smoke no more. Victims were no more to bleed. "Not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with his own blood he now entered into the holy place, there to appear in the presence of God for us."

This was the hour of association and union to all the worshipers of God. When Christ said, "It is finished," He threw down the wall of partition which had so long divided the Gentile from the Jew. He gathered into one all the faithful out of every kindred and people. He proclaimed the hour to be come when the knowledge of the true God should be no longer confined to one nation, nor His worship to one temple; but over all the earth, the worshipers of the Father should serve Him "in spirit and in truth." From that hour they who dwelt in the "uttermost ends of the earth, strangers to the covenant of promise," began to be "brought nigh." In that hour the light of the gospel dawned from afar on the British Islands.

During a long course of ages, Providence seemed to be occupied in preparing the world for this revolution. The whole Jewish economy was intended to usher it in. The knowledge of God was preserved unextinguished in one corner of the world, that thence, in

due time, might issue forth the light which was to overspread the earth. Successive revelations gradually enlarged the views of men beyond the narrow bounds of Judea, to a more extensive kingdom of God. Signs and miracles awakened their expectation and directed their eyes toward this great event. Whether God descended on the flaming mountain, or spoke by the prophet's voice; whether He scattered His chosen people into captivity, or reassembled them in their own land, He was still carrying on a progressive plan, which was accomplished at the death of Christ.

Not only in the territories of Israel, but over all the earth, the great dispensations of Providence respected the approach of this important hour. If empires rose or fell; if war divided, or peace united, the nations; if learning civilized their manners, or philosophy enlarged their views; all was, by the secret decree of Heaven, made to ripen the world for that "fulness of time," when Christ was to publish the whole counsel of God. The Persian, the Macedonian, the Roman conqueror, entered upon the stage each at his predicted period. The revolutions of power, and the succession of monarchies, were so arranged by Providence, as to facilitate the progress of the gospel through the habitable world, after the day had arrived, "when the stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands, should become a great moun-

tain and fill the earth." This was the day which Abraham saw afar off, and was glad. This was the day which "many prophets, and kings, and righteous men desired to see, but could not"; the day for which "the earnest expectation of the creature," long opprest with ignorance, and bewildered in superstition, might be justly said to wait.

V. This was the hour of Christ's triumph over all the powers of darkness; the hour in which He overthrew dominions and thrones, "led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." The contest which the kingdom of darkness had long maintained against the kingdom of light was now brought to its crisis. The period was come when "the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." For many ages the most gross superstition had filled the earth. "The glory of the incorruptible God" was everywhere, except in the land of Judea, "changed into images made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and beasts, and creeping things." The world, which the Almighty created for Himself, seemed to have become a temple of idols. Even to vices and passions altars were raised; and what was entitled religion, was in effect a discipline of impurity. In the midst of this universal darkness, Satan had erected his throne, and the learned and the polished, as well as the savage nations, bowed down before him. But at the hour when Christ appeared

on the cross, the signal of His defeat was given. His kingdom suddenly departed from Him; the reign of idolatry passed away: He was beheld to fall "like lightning from heaven." In that hour the foundation of every pagan temple shook. The statue of every false god tottered on its base. The priest fled from his falling shrine; and the heathen oracles became dumb forever.

As on the cross Christ triumphed over Satan, so He overcame His auxiliary, the world. Long had it assailed Him with its temptations and discouragements; in this hour of severe trial He surmounted them all. Formerly He had despised the pleasures of the world. He now baffled its terrors. Hence He is justly said to have "crucified the world." By His sufferings He ennobled distress; and He darkened the luster of the pomp and vanities of life. He discovered to His followers the path which leads, through affliction, to glory and to victory; and He imparted to them the same spirit which enabled Him to overcome. "My kingdom is not of this world. In this world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Death also, the last foe of man, was the victim of this hour. The formidable appearance of the specter remained; but his dart was taken away. For, in the hour when Christ expiated guilt, He disarmed death, by securing the resurrection of the just. When

He said to His penitent fellow sufferer, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise," He announced to all His followers the certainty of heavenly bliss. He declared the cherubim to be dismissed and the flaming sword to be sheathed, which had been appointed at the fall, to keep from man "the way of the tree of life." Faint, before this period, had been the hope, indistinct the prospect, which even good men enjoyed of the heavenly kingdom. Life and immortality were now brought to light. From the hill of Calvary the first clear and certain view was given to the world of the everlasting mansions. Since that hour they have been the perpetual consolation of believers in Christ. Under trouble, they soothe their minds; amid temptation, they support their virtue; and in their dying moments enable them to say, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory"?

VI. This was the hour when our Lord erected that spiritual kingdom which is never to end. How vain are the counsels and designs of men! How shallow is the policy of the wicked! How short their triumphing! The enemies of Christ imagined that in this hour they had successfully accomplished their plan for His destruction. They believed that they had entirely scattered the small party of His followers, and had extinguished His name and His honor forever. In derision they addrest Him as a king. They clothed Him with

purple robes; they crowned Him with a crown of thorns; they put a reed into His hand; and, with insulting mockery, bowed the knee before Him. Blind and impious men! How little did they know that the Almighty was at that moment setting Him as a king on the hill of Zion; giving Him "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession"! How little did they know that their badges of mock royalty were at that moment converted into the signals of absolute dominion, and the instruments of irresistible power! The reed which they put into His hands became "a rod of iron," with which He was to "break in pieces his enemies," a scepter with which He was to rule the universe in righteousness. The cross which they thought was to stigmatize Him with infamy, became the ensign of His renown. Instead of being the reproach of His followers, it was to be their boast and their glory. The cross was to shine on palaces and churches throughout the earth. It was to be assumed as the distinction of the most powerful monarchs, and to wave in the banner of victorious armies when the memory of Herod and Pilate should be accurst, when Jerusalem should be reduced to ashes, and the Jews be vagabonds over all the world.

These were the triumphs which commenced at this hour. Our Lord saw them already in their birth; He saw of the travail of His

soul, and was satisfied. He beheld the Word of God going forth, conquering, and to conquer; subduing, to the obedience of His laws, the subduers of the world; carrying light into the regions of darkness, and mildness into the habitations of cruelty. He beheld the Gentiles waiting below the cross, to receive the gospel. He beheld Ethiopia and the Isles stretching out their hands to God; the desert beginning to rejoice and to blossom as the rose; and the knowledge of the Lord filling the earth, as the waters cover the sea. Well pleased, He said, "It is finished." As a conqueror He retired from the field, reviewing His triumphs: "He bowed his head and gave up the ghost." From that hour, Christ was no longer a mortal man, but "Head over all things to the Church," the glorious King of men and angels, of whose dominion there shall be no end. His triumphs shall perpetually increase. "His name shall endure forever; it shall last as long as the sun; men shall be blest in him, and all nations shall call him blest."

Such were the transactions, such the effects, of this ever-memorable hour. With all those great events was the mind of our Lord filled, when He lifted His eyes to heaven, and said, "Father! the hour is come."

From this view which we have taken of this subject, permit me to suggest what ground it affords to confide in the mercy of God for the

pardon of sin; to trust to His faithfulness for the accomplishment of all His promises; and to approach to Him, with gratitude and devotion, in acts of worship.

In the first place, the death of Christ affords us ground to confide in the divine mercy for the pardon of sin. All the steps of that high dispensation of Providence, which we have considered, lead directly to this conclusion, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" This is the final result of the discoveries of the gospel. On this rests the great system of consolation which it hath reared up for men. We are not left to dubious and intricate reasonings concerning the conduct which God may be expected to hold toward His offending creatures: but we are led to the view of important and illustrious facts which strike the mind with evidence irresistible. For it is possible to believe that such great operations, as I have endeavored to describe, were carried on by the Almighty in vain? Did He excite in the hearts of His creatures such encouraging hopes, without any intention to fulfil them? After so long a preparation of goodness, could He mean to deny forgiveness to the penitent and the humble? When overcome by the sense of guilt, man looks up with an astonished eye to the justice of his Creator, let him recollect that hour of which the text

speaks, and be comforted. The signals of divine mercy, erected in his view, are too conspicuous to be either distrusted or mistaken.

In the next place, the discoveries of this hour afford the highest reason to trust in the divine faithfulness for the accomplishment of every promise which remains yet unfulfilled. For this was the hour of the completion of God's ancient covenant.

It was the "performance of the mercy promised to the fathers." We behold the consummation of a great plan, which, throughout a course of ages, had been uniformly pursued; and which, against every human appearance, was, at the appointed moment, exactly fulfilled." No length of time alters His purpose. No obstacles can retard it. Toward the ends accomplished in this hour, the most repugnant instruments were made to operate. We discern God bending to His purpose the jarring passions, the opposite interests, and even the vices of men; uniting seeming contrarieties in His scheme; making "the wrath of man to praise him"; obliging the ambition of princes, the prejudices of Jews, the malice of Satan, all to concur, either in bringing forward this hour, or in completing its destined effects. With what entire confidence ought we to wait for the fulfilment of all His other promises in their due time, even when events are most embroiled and the prospect is most discoura-

ging: "Altho thou sayst thou canst not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him." Be attentive only to perform thy duty; leave the event to God, and be assured that, under the direction of His Providence, "all things shall work together" for a happy issue.

Lastly, the consideration of this whole subject tends to excite gratitude and devotion, when we approach to God in acts of worship. The hour of which I have discust, presents Him to us in the amiable light of the deliverer of mankind, the restorer of our forfeited hopes. We behold the greatness of the Almighty, softened by the mild radiance of condescension and mercy. We behold Him diminishing the awful distance at which we stand from His presence, by appointing for us a mediator and intercessor, through whom the humble may, without dismay, approach to Him who made them. By such views of the divine nature, Christian faith lays the foundation for a worship which shall be at once rational and affectionate; a worship in which the light of the understanding shall concur with the devotion of the heart, and the most profound reverence be united with the most cordial love. Christian faith is not a system of speculative truths. It is not a lesson of moral instruction only. By a train of high discoveries which it reveals, by a succession of interesting objects which it places in our view,

it is calculated to elevate the mind, to purify the affections, and by the assistance of devotion, to confirm and encourage virtue. Such, in particular, is the scope of that divine institution, the sacrament of our Lord's Supper. To this happy purpose let it conduce, by concentering in one striking point of light all that the gospel has displayed of what is most important to man. Touched with such contrition for past offenses, and filled with a grateful sense of divine goodness, let us come to the altar of God, and, with a humble faith in His infinite mercies, devote ourselves to His service forever.

DWIGHT

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

TIMOTHY DWIGHT was born at Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1752. He graduated from Yale in 1769, served as chaplain in the army during the Revolutionary War and was chosen president of his university in 1795. He died, after holding that office for twelve years, in 1817. Lyman Beecher, who attributed his conversion to him, says: "He was of noble form, with a noble head and body, and had one of the sweetest smiles that ever you saw. When I heard him preach on 'the harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved,' a whole avalanche rolled down on my mind. I went home weeping every step."

DWIGHT

1752—1817

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. —Jeremiah x., 23.

FEW of this audience will probably deny the truth of a direct Scriptural declaration. With as little reason can it be denied that most of them apparently live in the very manner in which they would live if the doctrine were false: or that they rely, chiefly at least, on their own sagacity, contrivance and efforts for success in this life and that which is to come. As little can it be questioned that such self-confidence is a guide eminently dangerous and deceitful. Safe as we may feel under its direction, our safety is imaginary. The folly of others in trusting to themselves we discern irresistibly. The same folly they perceive, with equal evidence, in us. Our true wisdom lies in willingly feeling, and cheerfully acknowledging, our dependence on God; and in committing ourselves with humble reliance to His care and direction.

With these observations I will now proceed

to illustrate the truth of the doctrine. The mode which I shall pursue will, probably, be thought singular. I hope it will be useful. Metaphysical arguments, which are customarily employed for the purpose of establishing this and several other doctrines of theology, are, if I mistake not, less satisfactory to the minds of men at large than the authors of them appear to believe. Facts, wherever they can be fairly adduced for this end, are attended with a superior power of conviction; and commonly leave little doubt behind them. On these, therefore, I shall at the present time rely for the accomplishment of my design. In the first place, the doctrine of the text is evident from the great fact that the birth and education of all men depend not on themselves.

The succeeding events of life are derived, in a great measure at least, from our birth. By this event, it is in a prime degree determined whether men shall be princes or peasants, opulent or poor, learned or ignorant, honorable or despised; whether they shall be civilized or savage, freemen or slaves, Christians or heathens, Mohammedans or Jews.

A child is born of Indian parents in the western wilderness. By his birth he is, of course, a savage. His friends, his mode of life, his habits, his knowledge, his opinions, his conduct, all grow out of this single event. His first thoughts, his first instructions, and

all the first objects with which he is conversant, the persons whom he loves, the life to which he assumes are all savage. He is an Indian from the cradle; he is an Indian to the grave. To say that he could not be otherwise, we are not warranted; but that he is not is certain.

Another child is born of a Bedouin Arab. From this moment he begins to be an Arabian. His hand is against every man; and every man's hand is against him. Before he can walk, or speak, he is carried through pathless wastes in search of food; and roams in the arms of his mother, and on the back of a camel, from spring to spring, and from pasture to pasture. Even then he begins his conflict with hunger and thirst; is scorched by a vertical sun; shriveled by the burning sand beneath; and poisoned by the breath of the simoom. Hardened thus through his infancy and childhood, both in body and mind, he becomes, under the exhortations and example of his father, a robber from his youth; attacks every stranger whom he is able to overcome; and plunders every valuable thing on which he can lay his hand.

A third receives his birth in the palace of a British nobleman; and is welcomed to the world as the heir apparent of an ancient, honorable and splendid family. As soon as he opens his eyes on the light, he is surrounded by all the enjoyments which opulence

can furnish, ingenuity contrive, or fondness bestow. He is dandled on the knee of indulgence; encircled by attendants, who watch and prevent alike his necessities and wishes; cradled on down; and charmed to sleep by the voice of tenderness and care. From the dangers and evils of life he is guarded with anxious solicitude. To its pleasures he is conducted by the ever-ready hand of maternal affection. His person is shaped and improved by a succession of masters; his mind is opened, invigorated and refined by the assiduous superintendence of learning and wisdom. While a child he is served by a host of menials and flattered by successive trains of visitors. When a youth he is regarded by a band of tenants with reverence and awe. His equals in age bow to his rank; and multitudes, of superior years acknowledge his distinction by continual testimonies of marked respect. When a man, he engages the regard of his sovereign; commands the esteem of the senate; and earns the love and applause of his country.

A fourth child, in the same kingdom, is begotten by a beggar, and born under a hedge. From his birth he is trained to suffering and hardihood. He is nursed, if he can be said to be nursed at all, on a coarse, scanty and precarious pittance; holds life only as a tenant at will; combats from the first dawnings of intellect with insolence, cold and nakedness; is

originally taught to beg and to steal; is driven from the doors of men by the porter or the house dog; and is regarded as an alien from the family of Adam. Like his kindred worms, he creeps through life in the dust; dies under the hedge, where he is born; and is then, perhaps, cast into a ditch, and covered with earth by some stranger, who remembers that, altho a beggar, he still was a man.

A child enters the world in China; and unites, as a thing of course, with his sottish countrymen in the stupid worship of the idol Fo. Another prostrates himself before the Lama, in consequence of having received his being in Tibet, and of seeing the Lama worshiped by all around him.

A third, who begins his existence in Turkey, is carried early to the mosque; taught to lisp with profound reverence the name of Mohammed; habituated to repeat the prayers and sentences of the Koran as the means of eternal life; and induced, in a manner irresistible, to complete his title to Paradise by a pilgrimage to Mecca.

The Hindu infant grows into a religious veneration for the cow; and perhaps never doubts that, if he adds to this solemn devotion to Juggernaut, the Gooroos, and the Dewtahs, and performs carefully his ablutions in the Ganges, he shall wash away all his sins, and obtain, by the favor of Brahma, a seat among the blest.

In our own favored country, one child is born of parents devoted solely to this world. From his earliest moments of understanding, he hears and sees nothing commended but hunting, horse-racing, visiting, dancing, dressing, riding, parties, gaming, acquiring money with eagerness and skill, and spending it in gaiety, pleasure and luxury. These things, he is taught by conversation and example, constitute all the good of man. His taste is formed, his habits are riveted, and the whole character of his soul is turned to them before he is fairly sensible that there is any other good. The question whether virtue and piety are either duties or blessings he probably never asks. In the dawn of life he sees them neglected and despised by those whom he most reverences; and learns only to neglect and despise them also. Of Jehovah he thinks as little, and for the same reason as a Chinese or a Hindu. They pay their devotions to Fo and to Juggernaut: he his to money and pleasure. Thus he lives, and dies, a mere animal; a stranger to intelligence and morality, to his duty and his God.

Another child comes into existence in the mansion of knowledge and virtue. From his infancy, his mind is fashioned to wisdom and piety. In his infancy he is taught and allured to remember his Creator; and to unite, first in form and then in affection, in the household devotions of the morning and evening.

God he knows almost as soon as he can know anything. The presence of that glorious being he is taught to realize almost from the cradle; and from the dawn of intelligence to understand the perfections and government of his Creator. His own accountableness, as soon as he can comprehend it, he begins to feel habitually, and always. The way of life through the Redeemer is early, and regularly explained to him by the voice of parental love; and enforced and endeared in the house of God. As soon as possible, he is enabled to read, and persuaded to "search the Scriptures." Of the approach, the danger and the mischiefs of temptations, he is tenderly warned. At the commencement of sin, he is kindly checked in his dangerous career. To God he was solemnly given in baptism. To God he was daily commended in fervent prayer. Under this happy cultivation he grows up "like an olive-tree in the courts of the Lord"; and, green, beautiful and flourishing, he blossoms; bears fruit; and is prepared to be transplanted by the divine hand to a kinder soil in the regions above.

How many, and how great, are the differences in these several children! How plainly do they all, in ordinary circumstances, arise out of their birth! From their birth is derived, of course, the education which I have ascribed to them; and from this education spring in a great measure both character and

their destiny. The place, the persons, the circumstances, are here evidently the great things which, in the ordinary course of Providence, appear chiefly to determine what the respective men shall be; and what shall be those allotments which regularly follow their respective characters. As, then, they are not at all concerned in contriving or accomplishing either their birth or their education; it is certain that, in these most important particulars, the way of man is not in himself. God only can determine what child shall spring from parents, wise or foolish, virtuous or sinful, rich or poor, honorable or infamous, civilized or savage, Christian or heathen.

I wish it to be distinctly understood, and carefully remembered, that "in the moral conduct of all these individuals no physical necessity operates." Every one of them is absolutely a free agent; as free as any created agent can be. Whatever he does is the result of choice, absolutely unconstrained.

Let me add, that not one of them is placed in a situation in which, if he learns and performs his duty to the utmost of his power, he will fail of being finally accepted.

Secondly. The doctrine is strikingly evident from this great fact, also, that the course of life, which men usually pursue, is very different from that which they have intended.

Human life is ordinarily little else than a collection of disappointments. Rarely is the

life of man such as he designs it shall be. Often do we fail of pursuing, at all, the business originally in our view. The intentional farmer becomes a mechanic, a seaman, a merchant, a lawyer, a physician, or a divine. The very place of settlement, and of residence through life, is often different, and distant, from that which was originally contemplated. Still more different is the success which follows our efforts.

All men intend to be rich and honorable; to enjoy ease; and to pursue pleasure. But how small is the number of those who compass these objects! In this country, the great body of mankind are, indeed, possest of competence; a safer and happier lot than that to which they aspire; yet few, very few are rich. Here, also, the great body of mankind possess a character, generally reputable; but very limited is the number of those who arrive at the honor which they so ardently desire, and of which they feel assured. Almost all stop at the moderate level, where human efforts appear to have their boundary established in the determination of God. Nay, far below this level creep multitudes of such as began life with full confidence in the attainment of distinction and splendor.

The lawyer, emulating the eloquence, business, and fame of Murray or Dunning, and secretly resolved not to slacken his efforts until all his rivals in the race for glory are

outstript is often astonished, as well as broken-hearted, to find business and fame pass by his door, and stop at the more favored mansion of some competitor, in his view less able, and less discerning, than himself.

The physician, devoted to medical science, and possest of distinguished powers of discerning and removing diseases, is obliged to walk; while a more fortunate empiric, ignorant and worthless, rolls through the streets in his coach.

The legislator beholds with anguish and amazement the suffrages of his countrymen given eagerly to a rival candidate devoid of knowledge and integrity; but skilled in flattering the base passions of men, and deterred by no hesitations of conscience, and no fears of infamy, from saying and doing anything which may secure his election.

The merchant often beholds with a despairing eye his own ships sunk in the ocean; his debtors fail; his goods unsold, his business cramped; and himself, his family and his hopes ruined; while a less skilful but more successful neighbor sees wealth blown to him by every wind, and floated on every wave.

The crops of the farmer are stinted; his cattle die; his markets are bad; and the purchaser of his commodities proves to be a cheat, who deceives his confidence and runs away with his property.

Thus the darling schemes and fondest hopes

of man are daily frustrated by time. While sagacity contrives, patience matures, and labor industriously executes, disappointment laughs at the curious fabric, formed by so many efforts and gay with so many brilliant colors, and while the artists imagine the work arrived at the moment of completion, brushes away the beautiful web, and leaves nothing behind.

The designs of men, however, are in many respects not infrequently successful. The lawyer and physician acquire business and fame; the statesman, votes; and the farmer, wealth. But their real success, even in this case, is often substantially the same with that already recited. In all plans, and all labors, the supreme object is to become happy. Yet, when men have actually acquired riches and honor, or secured to themselves popular favor, they still find the happiness, which they expected, eluding their grasp. Neither wealth, fame, office, nor sensual pleasure can yield such good as we need. As these coveted objects are accumulated, the wishes of man always grow faster than his gratifications. Hence, whatever he acquires, he is usually as little satisfied as before, and often less.

A principal design of the mind in laboring for these things is to become superior to others. But almost all rich men are obliged to see, and usually with no small anguish, others richer than themselves; honorable men,

others more honorable; voluptuous men, others who enjoy more pleasure. The great end of the strife is therefore unobtained; and the happiness expected never found. Even the successful competitor in the race utterly misses his aim. The real enjoyment existed, altho it was unperceived by him, in the mere strife for superiority. When he has outstript all his rivals the contest is at an end: and his spirits, which were invigorated only by contending, languish for want of a competitor.

Besides, the happiness in view was only the indulgence of pride, or mere animal pleasure. Neither of these can satisfy or endure. A rational mind may be, and often is, so narrow and groveling as not to aim at any higher good, to understand its nature or to believe its existence. Still, in its original constitution, it was formed with a capacity for intellectual and moral good, and was destined to find in this good its only satisfaction. Hence, no inferior good will fill its capacity or its desires. Nor can this bent of its nature ever be altered. Whatever other enjoyment, therefore, it may attain, it will, without this, still crave and still be unhappy.

No view of the ever-varying character and success of mankind in their expectations of happiness, and their efforts to obtain it, can illustrate this doctrine more satisfactorily than that of the progress and end of a class

of students in this seminary. At their first appearance here they are all exactly on the same level. Their character, their hopes and their destination are the same. They are enrolled on one list; and enter upon a collegiate life with the same promise of success. At this moment they are plants, appearing just above the ground; all equally fair and flourishing. Within a short time, however, some begin to rise above others; indicating by a more rapid growth a structure of superior vigor, and promising both more early and more abundant fruit. . . .

Were I to ask the youths who are before me what are their designs and expectations concerning their future life, and write down their several answers, what a vast difference would ultimately be found between those answers and the events which would actually befall them! To how great a part of that difference would facts, over which they could have no control, give birth! How many of them will in all probability be less prosperous, rich, and honorable than they now intend: how many devoted to employments of which at present they do not even dream; in circumstances, of which they never entertained even a thought, behind those whom they expected to outrun, poor, sick, in sorrow or in the grave.

First. You see here, my young friends, the most solid reasons for gratitude to your Creator.

God, only, directed that you should be born in this land, and in the midst of peace, plenty, civilization, freedom, learning and religion; and that your existence should not commence in a Tartarian forest or an African waste. God, alone, ordered that you should be born of parents who knew and worshiped Him, the glorious and eternal Jehovah; and not of parents who bowed before the Lama or the ox, an image of brass or the stock of a tree. In the book of His counsels, your names, so far as we are able to judge, were written in the fair lines of mercy. It is of His overflowing goodness that you are now here; surrounded with privileges, and beset with blessings, educated to knowledge, usefulness and piety, and prepared to begin an endless course of happiness and glory. All these delightful things have been poured into your lap, and have come, unbidden, to solicit your acceptance. If these blessings awaken not gratitude, it can not be awakened by the blessings in the present world. If they are not thankfully felt by you, it is because you know not how to be thankful. Think what you are, and where you are; and what and where you just as easily might have been. Remember that, instead of cherishing tender affections, imbibing refined sentiments, exploring the field of science, and assuming the name and character of the sons of God, you might as easily have been dozing in the smoke of a wigwam,

brandishing a tomahawk, or dancing round an emboweled captive; or that you might yourself have been emboweled by the hand of superstition, and burnt on the altars of Moloch. If you remember these things, you can not but call to mind, also, who made you to differ from the miserable beings who have thus lived and died.

Secondly. This doctrine forcibly demands of you to moderate desires and expectations.

There are two modes in which men seek happiness in the enjoyments of the present world. "Most persons freely indulge their wishes, and intend to find objects sufficient in number and value to satisfy them." A few "aim at satisfaction by proportioning their desires to the number and measure of their probable gratifications." By the doctrine of the text, the latter method is stamped with the name of wisdom, and on the former is inscribed the name of folly. Desires indulged grow faster and farther than gratifications extend. Ungratified desire is misery. Expectations eagerly indulged and terminated by disappointment are often exquisite misery. But how frequently are expectations raised only to be disappointed, and desires let loose only to terminate in distress! The child pines for a toy: the moment he possesses it, he throws it by and cries for another. When they are piled up in heaps around him, he looks at them without pleasure, and leaves

them without regret. He knew not that all the good which they could yield lay in expectation; nor that his wishes for more would increase faster than toys could be multiplied, and is unhappy at last for the same reason as at first: his wishes are ungratified. Still indulging them, and still believing that the gratification of them will furnish the enjoyment for which he pines, he goes on, only to be unhappy.

Men are merely taller children. Honor, wealth and splendor are the toys for which grown children pine; but which, however accumulated, leave them still disappointed and unhappy. God never designed that intelligent beings should be satisfied with these enjoyments. By his wisdom and goodness they were formed to derive their happiness and virtue.

Moderated desires constitute a character fitted to acquire all the good which this world can yield. He who is prepared, in whatever situation he is, therewith to be content, has learned effectually the science of being happy, and possesses the alchemic stone which will change every metal into gold. Such a man will smile upon a stool, while Alexander at his side sits weeping on the throne of the world.

The doctrine of the text teaches you irresistibly that, since you can not command gratifications, you should command your de-

sires; and that, as the events of life do not accord with your wishes, your wishes should accord with them. Multiplied enjoyments fall to but few men, and are no more rationally expected than the highest prize in a lottery. But a well-regulated mind, a dignified independence of the world, and a wise preparation to possess one's soul in patience, whatever circumstances may exist, is in the power of every man, and is greater wealth than that of both Indies, and greater honor than Cæsar ever required.

Thirdly. As your course and your success through life are not under your control, you are strongly urged to commit yourselves to God, who can control both.

That you can not direct your course through the world, that your best concerted plans will often fail, that your sanguine expectations will be disappointed, and that your fondest worldly wishes will terminate in mortification can not admit of a momentary doubt. That God can direct you, that He actually controls all your concerns, and that, if you commit yourselves to His care, He will direct you kindly and safely, can be doubted only of choice. Why, then, do you hesitate to yield yourselves and your interests to the guidance of your Maker? There are two reasons which appear especially to govern mankind in this important concern; they do not and will not realize the agency of God in their affairs; and

they do not choose to have them directed as they imagine He will direct them. The former is the result of stupidity; the latter, of impiety. Both are foolish in the extreme, and not less sinful than foolish.

The infinitely wise, great and glorious benefactor of the universe has offered to take men by the hand, lead them through the journey of life, and conduct them to His own house in the heavens. The proof of His sincerity in making this offer has been already produced. He has given His own Son to live, and die, and rise, and reign, and intercede for our race. "Herein is love," if there ever was love; "not that we have loved him, but that he has loved us." That He, who has done this, should not be sincere is impossible. St. Paul, therefore, triumphantly asks what none can answer: "He, that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Trust, then, His word with undoubting confidence; take His hand with humble gratitude, and with all thy heart obey His voice, which you will everywhere hear, saying, "this is the way, walk ye therein." In sickness and in health, by night and by day, at home and in crowds, He will watch over you with tenderness inexpressible. He will make you lie down in green pastures, lead you beside the still waters and guide you in paths of righteousness, for His name's

sake. He will prepare a table before you in the presence of your enemies, and cause your cup to run over with blessings. When you pass through the waters of affliction He will be with you, and through the rivers they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle on you. From their native heavens He will commission those charming twin sisters, goodness and mercy, to descend and "follow you all your days."

But if you wish God to be your guide and your friend, you must conform to His pleasure. Certainly you can not wonder that the infinitely Wise should prefer His own wisdom to yours, and that He should choose for His children their allotments, rather than leave them to choose for themselves. That part of His pleasure, which you are to obey, is all summed up in the single word duty, and it is perfectly disclosed in the Scriptures. The whole scheme is so formed as to be plain, easy, profitable, and delightful; profitable in hand, delightful in the possession. Every part and precept of the whole is calculated for this end, and will make you only wise, good, and happy.

Life has been often styled an ocean, and our progress through it a voyage. The ocean is tempestuous and billowy, overspread by a cloudy sky, and fraught beneath with shelves and quicksands. The voyage is eventful be-

yond comprehension, and at the same time full of uncertainty, and replete with danger. Every adventurer needs to be well prepared for whatever may befall him, and well secured against the manifold hazards of losing his course, sinking in the abyss, or of being wrecked against the shore.

These evils have all existed at all times. The present, and that part of the past which is known to you by experience, has seen them multiplied beyond example. It has seen the ancient and acknowledged standards of thinking violently thrown down. Religion, morals, government, and the estimate formed by man of crimes and virtues, and of all the means of usefulness and enjoyment, have been questioned, attacked, and in various places, and with respect to millions of the human race, finally overthrown. A licentiousness of opinion and conduct, daring, outrageous, and rending asunder every bond formed by God or man, has taken place of former good sense and sound morals, and has long threatened the destruction of human good. Industry, cunning, and fraud have toiled with unrivaled exertions to convert man into a savage and the world into a desert. A wretched and hypocritical philanthropy, also, not less mischievous, has stalked forth as the companion of these ravages: a philanthropy born in a dream, bred in a hovel, and living only in professions. This guardian genius

of human interests, this friend of human rights, this redresser of human wrongs, is yet without a heart to feel, and without a hand to bless. But she is well furnished with lungs, with eyes, and a tongue. She can talk, and sigh, and weep at pleasure, but can neither pity nor give. The objects of her attachment are either knaves and villains at home, or unknown sufferers beyond her reach abroad. To the former, she ministers the sword and the dagger, that they may fight their way into place, and power, and profit. At the latter she only looks through a telescope of fancy, as an astronomer searches for stars invisible to the eye. To every real object of charity within her reach she complacently says, "Be thou warmed, and be thou filled; depart in peace."

By the daring spirit, the vigorous efforts, and the ingenious cunning so industriously exerted on the one hand, and the smooth and gentle benevolence so softly profest on the other, multitudes have been, and you easily may be, destroyed. The mischief has indeed been met, resisted, and overcome; but it has the heads and the lives of the hydra, and its wounds, which at times have seemed deadly, are much more readily healed than any good man could wish, than any sober man could expect. Hope not to escape the assaults of this enemy: To feel that you are in danger will ever be a preparation for your safety. But it

will be only such a preparation; your deliverance must ultimately and only flow from your Maker. Resolve, then, to commit yourselves to Him with a cordial reliance on His wisdom, power, and protection. Consider how much you have at stake, that you are bound to eternity, that your existence will be immortal, and that you will either rise to endless glory or be lost in absolute perdition. Heaven is your proper home. The path, which I have recommended to you, will conduct you safely and certainly to that happy world. Fill up life, therefore, with obedience to God, with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance unto life, the obedience to the two great commands of the gospel, with supreme love to God and universal good-will to men, the obedience to the two great commands of the law. On all your sincere endeavors to honor Him, and befriend your fellow men, He will smile; every virtuous attempt He will bless; every act of obedience He will reward. Life in this manner will be pleasant amid all its sorrows; and beams of hope will continually shine through the gloom, by which it is so often overcast. Virtue, the seed that can not die, planted from heaven, and cultivated by the divine hand, will grow up in your hearts with increasing vigor, and blossom in your lives with supernal beauty. Your path will be that of the just, and will gloriously resemble the dawning light, "which shines brighter and

brighter, to the perfect day.'' Peace will take you by the hand, and offer herself as the constant and delightful companion of your progress. Hope will walk before you, and with an unerring finger point out your course; and joy, at the end of the journey, will open her arms to receive you. You will wait on the Lord, and renew your strength; will mount up with wings as eagles; will run, and not be weary; will walk, and not faint.

ROBERT HALL

MARKS OF LOVE TO GOD

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Robert Hall, Baptist divine, was born at Arnesby, near Leicester, England, in 1764. Destined for the ministry, he was educated at the Baptist Academy at Bristol, and preached for the first time in 1779. In 1783 he began his ministry in Bristol and drew crowded congregations of all classes. The tradition of Hall's pupit oratory has secured his lasting fame. Many minds of a high order were fascinated by his eloquence, and his conversation was brilliant. His treatment of religious topics had the rare merit of commending evangelical doctrine to people of taste. Dugald Stewart declares that his writings and public utterances exhibited the English language in its perfection. He died in 1831.

ROBERT HALL

1764—1831

MARKS OF LOVE TO GOD

But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.—John v., 42.

THE persons whom our Lord addrest in these words made a high profession of religion, valued themselves upon their peculiar opportunities of knowing the true God and His will, and proclaimed themselves as the Israel and the temple of the Lord, while they despised the surrounding pagans as those who were strangers to the divine law. Yet the self-complacent Pharisees of our Savior's age were as far from the love of God, he assures them in the text, as any of those who had never heard of His name. In this respect, many of "the first were last, and the last first." The rejection of the gospel evinces a hardness of heart which is decisive against the character; and, in the case of the Pharisees, it gave ample evidence that they possest no love of God. Had they really known God, as our Lord argues, they would have known Himself to be sent by God: whereas, in proving the bitter enemies of Christ, they proved that they were in a state

of enmity against God. By parity of reason, we, my brethren, who know God and His Word in the way of Christian profession, ought not to take it for granted that we possess the love of God, and are in the way of eternal life: the same self-delusion may overtake us also; and similar admonitions may be no less necessary to many present, than to the Pharisees of old. Suffer then, my brethren, the word of exhortation, while I invite each individual seriously to consider this subject, with a view to the discovery of his real character.

In proceeding to lay down certain marks of grace, let it be premised, that either these marks partake of the nature of true religion, or they do not. If they do, they must be identified with it, and here the mark is the thing: if they do not partake of its nature, some of them may exist as indications where genuine religion is not. It is necessary, then, that we combine a variety of particular signs of grace: any one taken by itself, may, or may not, exist, without true religion; but where many are combined, no just doubt can remain.

Whether you have the love of God in your soul presents a most critical subject of inquiry; since the love of God will be acknowledged by all to be the great, the essential, principle of true religion. The simple question, then, to which I would call your attention, is this: "Am I, or am I not, a sincere lover of the Author of my being?"

In endeavoring to assist you in the decision of this momentous question, as it respects yourselves. I shall entreat your attention while I suggest a variety of marks which indicate love to God; and supposing the conviction produced by the statement to be, that you have not the love of God, I shall point out the proper improvement of such a conviction.

In suggesting various marks by which you may ascertain whether you love God or not, I would mention the general bent and turn of your thoughts, when not under the immediate control of circumstances; for these, you are aware, give a new and peculiar bias to our thoughts, and stamp them with an impress of their own. There is an infinite variety of thoughts continually passing through the mind of every individual: of these, some are thrown up by occasions; but others, and often the greater part, follow the habitual train of our associations. It is not to thoughts of the former kind that I refer; it is to those of the latter class—those involuntary thoughts which spring up of themselves in the mind of every person: it is these, not the former, that afford clear indication of the general temper and disposition. The question I would propose to you is, What is the bent of your thoughts when, disengaged from the influence of any particular occurrence, you are left to yourselves, in the intervals of retirement and

tranquillity, in the silence of the midnight watches, and, in short, whenever your mind is left free to its own spontaneous musings? Are the thoughts most familiar to your mind, at such times, thoughts of God and the things of God—or are they thoughts that turn upon the present world and its transient concerns? Are they confined, for the most part, within the narrow circle of time and sense; or do they make frequent and large excursions into the spiritual and eternal world? The answer to this question will go far to decide whether you have, or have not, the love of God. It is impossible that such an object as the divine Being should be absent long from your thoughts; impossible that His remembrance should long remain merged in the stream of other imaginations; unless you are supposed chargeable with a decided indifference to divine things! Unless you are destitute of love to God you can never be so utterly uncongenial in sentiment and feeling with the psalmist, when he says, "My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, while I meditate upon thee in the night watches." "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God!" When that man of God gazed upon the starry heavens, his mind was not merely wrought into astonishment at the physical energy there displayed; he was still more deeply lost in grateful admiration of the mercy of Providence as manifested to man—a sinful child of

dust, and yet visited by God in the midst of so magnificent a universe! But when day passes after day, and night after night, without any serious thoughts of God, it is plain that He is not the home of your mind, not your portion, center, and resting-place: and if this is the case, it is equally plain that you are not in a state of acceptance with Him; since nothing can be more certain than that, as our thoughts are, such must be our character. I do not ask what are your thoughts at particular times, or under the influence of some particular event: there may be little difference, on some occasions, between those who remember, and those who neglect, God habitually. The charge against the ungodly is, that "God is not in all their thoughts." If there are any here who feel this charge as bearing against themselves, let them take that solemn warning given by God himself at the close of the fiftieth psalm, "Oh, consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you!"

Let me request you to consider seriously how you stand disposed to the exercises of religion. If God is the object of your love, you will gladly avail yourselves of the most favorable opportunities of cultivating a closer friendship with the Father of your spirits: on the contrary, he who feels no regard for these opportunities, proves that he has no love to God, and will never be able to establish the

conviction that God is his friend. Wherever there exists a sincere friendship, opportunities of cultivating it are gladly embraced, and the opposite privations are regretted. Where a habitual neglect of sacred exercises prevails it must be interpreted as if it said, like those whom the prophet describes, "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from amongst us. Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy way!" If your closets seldom witness your private devotions, if your moments in retirement are languid and uninteresting—your religion can have no hold on your heart; and the reason why your religion has no hold on your heart is because you have no love of God. There are some whose religion sits easy and delightful upon them; its acts and functions are free and lively: there are others who seem to bear their religion as a burden, to drag their duties as a chain—as no vital part of themselves, but rather a cumbrous appendage: this is a decisive and melancholy symptom of a heart alienated from God. There is no genuine religion, no real contact of the heart with the best of beings, unless it makes us continually resort to Him as our chief joy. The psalmist is always expressing his fervent desires after God: after the light of the divine countenance, and the sense of the divine favor: but do you suppose such desires peculiar to the state of believers under the Old Testament? No, my

brethren; there exist more abundant reasons than ever, since the gospel of Christ has been displayed in all the glorious fulness of its blessings, why our souls should be inflamed with such feelings as those which inspired the psalmist, when he exclaimed, "As the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God!"

If you would ascertain whether you love God, consider how you stand affected toward the Word of God. We can entertain no just thoughts of God, but such as we derive from His own Word: we can acquire no true knowledge of God, nor cherish any suitable affections toward Him, unless they are such as His own revelation authorizes. Otherwise we must suppose that revelation insufficient for its specific purposes, and set the means against the end. All, therefore, who sincerely love God, are students of His Word; they here, also accord in soul with the psalmist, and like him, can say, "O how I love thy word! in it is my meditation all the day:" they eat it as food for their souls, and find it sweeter than honey. They go to it as to an inexhaustible fountain, and drink from it streams of sacred light and joy. A neglected Bible is too unambiguous a sign of an unsanctified heart; since that blest book can not fail to attract every one that loves its divine Author. How is it possible to delight in God, and yet neglect that Word which alone reveals Him in His true

and glorious character—alone discovers the way by which He comes into unison with us, and condescends to pardon us, to love us, and to guide us through all this mysterious state of being? It is observable that the only persons who are inattentive to their own sacred books are to be found among Christians. Mohammedans commit large portions of the Koran to memory; the Jews regard the Old Testament with reverence; the Hindu Brahmans are enthusiastically attached to their Shastra; while Christians alone neglect their Bible. And the reason is, that the Scriptures are so much more spiritual than the religious books received by others; they afford so little scope for mere amusement or self-complacency; they place the reader alone with God; they withdraw him from the things that are seen and temporal, and fix him among the things that are unseen and eternal; they disclose to his view at once the secret evils of his own condition, and the awful purity of that Being with whom he has to do. No wonder the ungodly man hates their light, neither comes to their light, but retires from it farther and farther into the shades of guilty ignorance. How melancholy the infatuation of such a character!

Estimate your character in respect to your love of God, by reflecting, with what sentiments you regard the people of God. God has a people peculiarly His own: they are not

of that world to which they outwardly belong —not conformed to it in the spirit of their mind; they stand apart, many of them at least, in conspicuous conformity to Jesus Christ, and in earnest expectation of the glory which He had promised. How, then, do you regard these decided followers of God? Do you shun their society with aversion and secret shame; or do you enjoy their communion as one of the most delightful among your Christian privileges? Are you content merely to be the companion of those who "have a name to live, but are dead": or can you say with the psalmist, "My delight is in the excellent of the earth"? or, with the beloved disciple, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren"? for, as he adds, "He that loveth him that begot, loveth him that is begotten"; if you do not love the image which you have seen, how can you love the unseen original? If the features of holiness and grace in the creature are not attractive to your view, how can your affections rise to the perfect essence? How can you ascend to the very sun itself, when you can not enjoy even the faint reflection of its glory? He who knew the heart, could alone say to those around Him, "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you": but tho none can address you now in the same tone of divine authority, yet we may hear it uttered by a voice—the voice of your own con-

science: you may know, without any perturbations of hope or fear, by the spiritual insensibility and inaction of your soul—by this you may know, with equal certainty as by a voice from heaven, that you have not the love of God in you.

Consider the disposition you entertain toward the person and office of the Son of God. "If ye had loved the Father, ye would have loved me also," was the constant argument of Jesus Christ to those Pharisees whom He addresses in the text. For Jesus Christ is the express image of God: the effulgence of the divine character is attempered in Him, to suit the views of sinful humanity. In the life of Jesus Christ we see how the divine Being conducts Himself in human form and in our own circumstances: we behold how He bears all the sorrows, and passes through all the temptations, of flesh and blood. Such, indeed, is the identity, so perfect the oneness of character, between the man Christ Jesus and the divine Being—that our Savior expressly assures us, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; I and my Father are one." The purpose for which God was manifested in the flesh was not to reveal high speculations concerning the nature of the Deity: it was to bear our sorrows, and to die for our sins. But can you contemplate Him, thus stooping to your condition, thus mingling with every interest of your own, and not be moved

by such a spectacle?—not be attracted, fixt, filled with grateful astonishment and devotion—crucified, as it were, on the cross of Christ, to the flesh, and to the world? What mark, then, of our possessing no love of God can equal this, that we are without love to Jesus Christ?—that neither the visibility of His divine excellence, nor His participation of all our human sufferings, can reach our hearts and command our affections?

In examining whether you love God, examine how you are affected by His benefits. These are so numerous and so distinguished that they ought to excite our most ardent gratitude: night and day they are experienced by us; they pervade every moment of our being. We know that favors from an enemy derive a taint from the hands through which they are received, and excite alienation rather than attachment: but the kindness of a friend, by constantly reminding us of himself, endears that friend more and more to our hearts; and thus, he that has no love to God receives all His favors without the least attraction toward their Author, whom he regards rather as an enemy than as a friend. But the Christian feels his love of God excited by every fresh goodness. The mercies of God have accompanied you through every stage of your journey; and they are exhibited to you in His word as stretching through a vast eternity. Are these the only benefits you

can receive without gratitude, and suffer to pass unregarded How, then, can any love of God dwell in your bosom?

Consider, in the next place, in what manner you are imprest by the sense of your sins. The question is not whether you have any sins,—none can admit a doubt on this point; the only inquiry is, how you are affected by those sins? Are they remembered by you with a sentiment of tender regret, of deep confusion and humiliation, that you should ever have so requited such infinite goodness? And is this sentiment combined with a sacred resolution to go and sin no more,—to devote yourself to the service of your divine Benefactor? If you can live without an habitual sense of penitential tenderness and reverential fear, be assured you can not love God: you have no experience of those Scripture declarations: "They shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days;" "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared;" you know not that "the goodness of God leadeth to repentence." If the mind is softened by the love of God, all His favors serve to inflame its gratitude, and confirm its devotion to His will: but he who has no love of God in his soul, thinks of nothing but how he may escape from God's hand, and selfishly devours all His favors, without an emotion of gratitude to the Giver.

Finally, let me remind you to consider how

you are affected to the present world. If you could only be exempt from its afflictions, would you wish it to be your lasting home? If you could surround yourself with all its advantages and enjoyments, would you be content to dwell in it forever? Yet you know that it is a place of separation and exile from the divine majesty; that it is a scene of darkness, in comparison with heaven, very faintly illuminated with the beams of His distant glory; that its inhabitant is constrained to say, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but mine eye hath not yet seen thee";—while heaven is the proper dwelling-place of God and His people! Could you then consent to remain here always, without ever seeing as you are seen—seeing light in His light—without ever beholding His glory; without ever drinking at the fountain, and basking in that presence which is fulness of joy, and life forevermore? always to remain immersed in the shadows of time—entombed in its corruptible possessions? never to ascend up on high to God and Christ and the glories of the eternal world? If such is the state of your spirit, you want the essential principle of a Christian—you want the love of God. The genuine Christian, the lover of God, is certain to feel himself a "stranger on the earth." No splendor, no emolument of this world,—not all the fascinations of sensual pleasure,—can detain his heart below the

skies, or keep him from sympathizing with the sentiment of the psalmist: "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I wake in thy likeness." I do not ask whether you have, at present, "a desire to depart": perhaps you may not be as yet sufficiently prepared and established to entertain so exalted a desire; but still, if you have received a new heart, you will deprecate nothing so much as having your portion in this life,—as having your eternal abode on earth. It is the character of faith to dwell much in eternity: the apostle says, in the name of all real believers, "We look not at the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal."

And now, my brethren, supposing the preceding remarks to have produced in any of you the conviction that you have not the love of God in you, permit me very briefly to point out the proper improvement of such a conviction.

First, it should be accompanied with deep humiliation. If you labored under the privation of some bodily organ, requisite to the discharge of an animal function, you would feel it as in some degree a humiliating circumstance; but what would be any defect of this kind, however serious, in comparison with that great want under which you labor—

the want of piety, the calamity of a soul estranged from the love of God! What are the other subjects of humiliation compared with this—a moral fall, a spiritual death in sin: and this, unless it be removed, the sure precursor of the second death—eternal ruin! "This is a lamentation indeed, and it shall be for a lamentation."

Suppose the children of a family, reared and provided for by the most affectionate of parents, to rise up in rebellion against their father, and cast off all the feelings of filial tenderness and respect; would any qualities those children might possess, any appearance of virtue they might exhibit in other respects, compensate for such an unnatural, such an awful deformity of character? Transfer this representation to your conduct in relation to God: "If I," says He, "am a father, where is my fear? if I am a master, where is my honor?" "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me: the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

And let your humiliation be accompanied with concern and alarm. To be alienated from the great Origin of being; to be severed, or to sever yourself from the essential Author and element of all felicity, must be a calmity which none can understand, an infinite wo

which none can measure or conceive. If the stream is cut off from the fountain, it soon ceases to flow, and its waters are dissipated in the air: and if the soul is cut off from God, it dies! Its vital contact with God,—its spiritual union with the Father of spirits through the blest Mediator, is the only life and beauty of the immortal soul. All, without this, are dead—"dead in trespasses and sins"! A living death—a state of restless wanderings, and unsatisfied desires! What a condition theirs! And, oh! what a prospect for such, when they look beyond this world! who will give them a welcome when they enter an eternal state? What reception will they meet with, and where? What consolation amid their losses and their sufferings, but that of the fellow-sufferers plunged in the same abyss of ruin? Impenitent sinners are allied to evil spirits, they have an affinity with the kingdom of darkness; and when they die, they are emphatically said to "go to their own place"!

This is an awful state for any to be in at present; but, blest be God, it is not yet a hopeless situation. Let no person say, "I find by what I have heard, that I do not love God, and therefore I can entertain no hope." There is a way of return and recovery open to all. Jesus Christ, my dear brethren, proclaims to you all, "I am the way. No man can come to the Father but by me":—but every one that will may come by this new and

living way; and, if you lose life eternal, you lose it because—according to his words just before the text—because "you will not come to Christ that you may have life." If you feel the misery, deformity, and danger of your state, then listen to His invitation, and embrace His promise. See the whole weight of your guilt transferred to His cross! See how God can be at once the just and the justifier! Take of the blood of sprinkling, and be at peace! His blood cleanseth from all sin: He will send that Spirit into your heart which will manifest Him to you; and where that Spirit is, there is liberty and holy love. He is the mystical ladder, let down from heaven to earth, on which angels are continually ascending and descending, in token of an alliance established between God and man. United by faith to Jesus Christ, you shall become a habitation of God through the Spirit; the Father will make you a partaker of His love, the Son of His grace, angels of their friendship; and you shall be preserved, and progressively sanctified, until, by the last change, all remains of the great epidemic source of evils shall be forever removed from your soul; and the love of God shall constitute your eternal felicity.

EVANS

THE FALL AND RECOVERY OF MAN

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

CHRISTMAS EVANS, a Welsh Baptist preacher, was born at Isgaerwen, Cardiganshire, South Wales, in 1766. Brought up as a Presbyterian, he turned Baptist in 1788, and was ordained the following year and ministered among the Baptists in Carmaerthenshire. In 1792 he became a sort of bishop to those of his denomination in Anglesey, where he took up his residence. After a somewhat stormy experience with those he undertook to rule, he removed to Carmaerthen in 1832. He distinguished himself by his debt-raising tours, in which his eloquence brought him much success. It is said that once when he was preaching on the subject of the prodigal son, he pointed to a distant mountain as he described the father seeing him while yet a great way off, whereupon thousands in his congregation turned their heads in evident expectation of seeing the son actually coming down the hills. He died in 1838.

EVANS

1766—1838

THE FALL AND RECOVERY OF MAN

For if, through the offense of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.—Romans v., 15.

MAN was created in the image of God. Knowledge and perfect holiness were imprest upon the very nature and faculties of his soul. He had constant access to his Maker, and enjoyed free communion with Him, on the ground of his spotless moral rectitude. But, alas! the glorious diadem is broken; the crown of righteousness is fallen. Man's purity is gone, and his happiness is forfeited. "There is none righteous; no, not one." "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." But the ruin is not hopeless. What was lost in Adam is restored in Christ. His blood redeems us from the bondage, and His gospel gives us back the forfeited inheritance. "For if, through the offense of one, many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." Let us consider, first, the corruption and condemnation of man; and secondly,

his gracious restoration to the favor of his offended God.

I. To find the cause of man's corruption and condemnation, we must go back to Eden. The eating of the "forbidden tree" was "the offense of one," in consequence of which "many are dead." This was the "sin," the act of "disobedience," which "brought death into the world, and all our wo." It was the greatest ingratitude to the divine bounty, and the boldest rebellion against the divine sovereignty. The royalty of God was contemned; the riches of His goodness slighted; and His most desperate enemy preferred before Him, as if he were a wiser counsellor than infinite wisdom. Thus man joined in league with hell against heaven; with demons of the bottomless pit against the almighty maker and benefactor; robbing God of the obedience due to His command and the glory due to His name; worshiping the creature instead of the creator; and opening the door to pride, unbelief, enmity, and all the wicked and abominable passions. How is the "noble vine," which was planted "wholly a right seed," "turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine"!

Who can look for pure water from such a fountain? "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." All the faculties of the soul are corrupted by sin; the understanding dark; the will perverse; the affections carnal; the con-

science full of shame, remorse, confusion, and mortal fear. Man is a hard-hearted and stiff-necked sinner; loving darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil; eating sin like bread, and drinking iniquity like water; holding fast deceit, and refusing to let it go. His heart is desperately wicked; full of pride, vanity, hypocrisy, covetousness, hatred of truth, and hostility to all that is good.

This depravity is universal. Among the natural children of Adam, there is no exemption from the original taint. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is as filthy rags." The corruption may vary in the degrees of development, in different persons; but the elements are in all, and their nature is everywhere the same; the same in the blooming youth, and the withered sire; in the haughty prince, and the humble peasant; in the strongest giant, and the feeblest invalid. The enemy has "come in like a flood." The deluge of sin has swept the world. From the highest to the lowest, there is no health or moral soundness. From the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, there is nothing but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores. The laws, and their violation, and the punishments everywhere invented for the suppression of vice, prove the universality of the evil. The bloody sacrifices, and various purifications, of the pagans, show the hand-

writing of remorse upon their consciences; proclaim their sense of guilt, and their dread of punishment. None of them are free from the fear which hath torment, whatever their efforts to overcome it, and however great their boldness in the service of sin and Satan. "Mene! Tekel!" is written on every human heart. "Wanting! wanting!" is inscribed on heathen fanes and altars; on the laws, customs, and institutions of every nation; and on the universal consciousness of mankind.

This inward corruption manifests itself in outward actions. "The tree is known by its fruit." As the smoke and sparks of the chimney show that there is fire within; so all the "filthy conversation" of men, and all "the unfruitful works of darkness" in which they delight, evidently indicate the pollution of the source whence they proceed. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The sinner's speech betrayeth him. "Evil speaking" proceeds from malice and envy. "Foolish talking and jesting" are evidence of impure and trifling thoughts. The mouth full of cursing and bitterness, the throat an open sepulcher, the poison of asps under the tongue, the feet swift to shed blood, destruction and misery in their paths, and the way of peace unknown to them, are the clearest and amplest demonstration that men "have gone out of the way," "have together become unprofitable." We see the bitter fruit of the

same corruption in robbery, adultery, gluttony, drunkenness, extortion, intolerance, persecution, apostasy, and every evil work—in all false religions; the Jew, obstinately adhering to the carnal ceremonies of an abrogated law; the Mohammedan, honoring an impostor, and receiving a lie for a revelation from God; the papist, worshiping images and relics, praying to departed saints, seeking absolution from sinful men, and trusting in the most absurd mummeries for salvation; the pagan, attributing divinity to the works of his own hands, adoring idols of wood and stone, sacrificing to malignant demons, casting his children into the fire or the flood as an offering to imaginary deities, and changing the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the beast and the worm.

"For these things' sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience." They are under the sentence of the broken law; the malediction of eternal justice. "By the offense of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation." "He that believeth not is condemned already." "The wrath of God abideth on him." "Curst is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them." "Wo unto the wicked; it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him." "They that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, shall reap the same." "Upon the wicked

the Lord shall rain fire, and snares, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup." "God is angry with the wicked every day; if he turn not he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready."

Who shall describe the misery of fallen man! His days, tho few, are full of evil. Trouble and sorrow press him forward to the tomb. All the world, except Noah and his family, are drowning in the deluge. A storm of fire and brimstone is fallen from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah. The earth is opening her mouth to swallow up alive Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Wrath is coming upon "the beloved city," even "wrath unto the uttermost." The tender and delicate mother is devouring her darling infant. The sword of men is executing the vengeance of God. The earth is emptying its inhabitants into the bottomless pit. On every hand are "confused noises, and garments rolled in blood." Fire and sword fill the land with consternation and dismay. Amid the universal devastation wild shrieks and despairing groans fill the air. God of mercy! is Thy ear heavy, that Thou canst not hear? or Thy arm shortened, that Thou canst not save? The heavens above are brass, and the earth beneath is iron; for Jehovah is pouring His indignation upon His adversaries, and He will not pity or spare.

Verily, "the misery of man is great upon him"! Behold the wretched fallen creature!

The pestilence pursues him. The leprosy cleaves to him. Consumption is wasting him. Inflammation is devouring his vitals. Burning fever has seized upon the very springs of life. The destroying angel has overtaken the sinner in his sins. The hand of God is upon him. The fires of wrath are kindling about him, drying up every well of comfort, and scorching all his hopes to ashes. Conscience is chastizing him with scorpions. See how he writhes! Hear how he shrieks for help! Mark what agony and terror are in his soul, and on his brow! Death stares him in the face, and shakes at him his iron spear. He trembles, he turns pale, as a culprit at the bar, as a convict on the scaffold. He is condemned already. Conscience has pronounced the sentence. Anguish has taken hold upon him. Terrors gather in battle array about him. He looks back, and the storms of Sinai pursue him; forward, and hell is moved to meet him; above, and the heavens are on fire; beneath, and the world is burning. He listens, and the judgment trump is calling; again, and the brazen chariots of vengeance are thundering from afar; yet again, the sentence penetrates his soul with anguish unspeakable—"Depart! ye accurst! into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!"

Thus, "by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed

upon all men, for that all have sinned." They are "dead in trespasses and sins," spiritually dead, and legally dead; dead by the mortal power of sin, and dead by the condemnatory sentence of the law; and helpless as sheep to the slaughter, they are driven fiercely on by the ministers of wrath to the all-devouring grave and the lake of fire!

But is there no mercy? Is there no means of salvation? Hark! amid all this prelude of wrath and ruin, comes a still small voice, saying: "Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."

II. This brings us to our second topic, man's gracious recovery to the favor of his offended God.

I know not how to present to you this glorious work, better than by the following figure. Suppose a vast graveyard, surrounded by a lofty wall, with only one entrance, which is by a massive iron gate, and that is fast bolted. Within are thousands and millions of human beings, of all ages and classes, by one epidemic disease bending to the grave. The graves yawn to swallow them, and they must all perish. There is no balm to relieve, no physician there. Such is the condition of man as a sinner. All have sinned; and it is written, "The soul that sinneth shall die." But while the unhappy race lay in that dismal prison, Mercy came and stood at the gate, and wept

over the melancholy scene, exclaiming—"Oh, that I might enter! I would bind up their wounds; I would relieve their sorrows; I would save their souls!" An embassy of angels, commissioned from the court of heaven to some other world, paused at the sight, and heaven forgave that pause. Seeing Mercy standing there, they cried:—"Mercy! canst thou not enter? Canst thou look upon that scene and not pity? Canst thou pity, and not relieve?" Mercy replied: "I can see!" and in her tears she added, "I can pity, but I can not relieve!" "Why canst thou not enter?" inquired the heavenly host. "Oh!" said Mercy, "Justice has barred the gate against me, and I must not—can not unbar it!" At this moment, Justice appeared, as if to watch the gate. The angels asked, "Why wilt thou not suffer Mercy to enter?" He sternly replied: "The law is broken, and it must be honored! Die they, or Justice must!" Then appeared a form among the angelic band like unto the Son of God. Addressing Himself to Justice, He said: "What are thy demands?" Justice replied: "My demands are rigid; I must have ignominy for their honor, sickness for their health, death for their life. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission!" "Justice," said the Son of God, "I accept thy terms! On me be this wrong! Let Mercy enter, and stay the carnival of death!" "What pledge dost thou give for

the performance of these conditions?" "My word; my oath!" "When wilt thou perform them?" "Four thousand years hence, on the hill of Calvary, without the walls of Jerusalem." The bond was prepared, and signed and sealed in the presence of attendant angels. Justice was satisfied, the gate was opened, and Mercy entered, preaching salvation in the name of Jesus. The bond was committed to patriarchs and prophets. A long series of rites and ceremonies, sacrifices and obligations, was instituted to perpetuate the memory of that solemn deed. At the close of the four thousandth year, when Daniel's "seventy weeks" were accomplished, Justice and Mercy appeared on the hill of Calvary. "Where," and Justice, "is the Son of God?" "Behold him, answered Mercy, "at the foot of the hill!" And there He came, bearing His own cross, and followed by His weeping church. Mercy retired, and stood aloof from the scene. Jesus ascended the hill like a lamb for the sacrifice. Justice presented the dreadful bond, saying, "This is the day on which this article must be canceled." The Redeemer took it. What did He do with it? Tear it to pieces, and scatter it to the winds? No! He nailed it to His cross, crying, "It is finished!" The victim ascended the altar. Justice called on Holy Fire to come down and consume the sacrifice. Holy Fire replied: "I come! I will consume the sacri-

fice, and then I will burn up the world!" It fell upon the Son of God, and rapidly consumed His humanity; but when it touched His deity, it expired. Then was there darkness over the whole land, and an earthquake shook the mountain; but the heavenly host broke forth in rapturous song—"Glory to God in the highest! on earth peace! good will to man!"

Thus grace has abounded, and the free gift has come upon all, and the gospel has gone forth proclaiming redemption to every creature. "By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." By grace ye are loved, redeemed, and justified. By grace ye are called, converted, reconciled and sanctified. Salvation is wholly of grace. The plan, the process, the consummation are all of grace.

"Where sin abounded, grace hath much more abounded." "Through the offense of one, many were dead." And as men multiplied, the offense abounded. The waters deluged the world, but could not wash away the dreadful stain. The fire fell from heaven, but could not burn out the accurst plague. The earth opened her mouth, but could not swallow up the monster sin. The law thundered forth its threat from the thick darkness on Sinai, but could not restrain, by all its terrors, the children of disobedience. Still the

offense abounded, and multiplied as the sands on the seashore. It waxed bold, and pitched its tents on Calvary, and nailed the Lawgiver to a tree. But in that conflict sin received its mortal wound. The victim was the victor. He fell, but in His fall He crusht the foe. He died unto sin, but sin and death were crucified upon His cross. Where sin abounded to condemn, grace hath much more abounded to justify. Where sin abounded to corrupt, grace hath much more abounded to purify. Where sin abounded to harden, grace hath much more abounded to soften and subdue. Where sin abounded to imprison men, grace hath much more abounded to proclaim liberty to the captives. Where sin abounded to break the law and dishonor the Lawgiver, grace hath much more abounded to repair the breach and efface the stain. Where sin abounded to consume the soul as with unquenchable fire and a gnawing worm, grace hath much more abounded to extinguish the flame and heal the wound. Grace hath abounded! It hath established its throne on the merit of the Redeemer's sufferings. It hath put on the crown, and laid hold of the golden scepter, and spoiled the dominion of the prince of darkness, and the gates of the great cemetery are thrown open, and there is the beating of a new life-pulse throughout its wretched population and immortality is walking among the tombs!

This abounding grace is manifested in the gift of Jesus Christ, by whose mediation our reconciliation and salvation are effected. With Him, believers are dead unto sin, and alive unto God. Our sins were slain at His cross, and buried in His tomb. His resurrection hath opened our graves, and given us an assurance of immortality. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from the wrath through him; for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

"The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Glory to God, for the death of His Son, by which this enmity is slain, and reconciliation is effected between the rebel and the law! This was the unspeakable gift that saved us from ruin; that wrestled with the storm, and turned it away from the devoted head of the sinner. Had all the angels of God attempted to stand between these two conflicting seas, they would have been swept to the gulf of destruction. "The blood of bulls and goats, on Jewish altars slain," could not take away sin, could not pacify the conscience. But Christ, the gift of divine grace, "Paschal Lamb by God appointed," a "sac-

rifice of nobler name and richer blood than they," bore our sins and carried our sorrows, and obtained for us the boon of eternal redemption. He met the fury of the tempest, and the floods went over His head; but His offering was an offering of peace, calming the storms and the waves, magnifying the law, glorifying its Author, and rescuing its violator from the wrath and ruin. Justice hath laid down his sword at the foot of the cross, and amity is restored between heaven and earth.

Hither, O ye guilty! come and cast away your weapons of rebellion! Come with your bad principles and wicked actions; your unbelief, and enmity, and pride; and throw them off at the Redeemer's feet! God is here waiting to be gracious. He will receive you; He will cast all your sins behind His back, into the depths of the sea; and they shall be remembered against you no more forever. By Heaven's "unspeakable gift," by Christ's invaluable atonement, by the free, infinite grace of the Father and Son, we persuade you, we beseech you, we entreat you, "be ye reconciled to God"!

It is by the work of the Holy Spirit with us that we obtain a personal interest in the work wrought on Calvary for us. If our sins are canceled, they are also crucified. If we are reconciled in Christ, we fight against our God no more. This is the fruit of faith. "With the heart man believeth unto right-

eousness." May the Lord inspire in every one of us that saving principle!

But those who have been restored to the divine favor may sometimes be cast down and dejected. They have passed through the sea, and sung praises on the shore of deliverance; but there is yet between them and Canaan "a waste howling wilderness," a long and weary pilgrimage, hostile nations, fiery serpents, scarcity of food, and the river of Jordan. Fears within and fightings without, they may grow discouraged, and yield to temptation and murmur against God, and desire to return to Egypt. But fear not, thou worm Jacob! Reconciled by the death of Christ; much more, being reconciled, thou shalt be saved by His life. His death was the price of our redemption; His life insures liberty to the believer. If by His death He brought you through the Red Sea in the night, by His life He can lead you through the river Jordan in the day. If by His death He delivered you from the iron furnace in Egypt, by His life He can save you from all perils of the wilderness. If by His death He conquered Pharaoh, the chief foe, by His life He can subdue Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan. "We shall be saved by his life." Because He liveth, we shall live also. "Be of good cheer!" The work is finished; the ransom is effected; the kingdom of heaven is open to all believers.

"Lift up your heads and rejoice," "ye prisoners of hope!" There is no debt unpaid, no devil unconquered, no enemy within your hearts that has not received a mortal wound! "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

SCHLEIERMACHER

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AN IMAGE OF OUR NEW LIFE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Friedrich Ernst Daniel Schleiermacher, German theologian and philosopher, was born at Breslau in 1768. He was brought up in a religious home and in 1787 went to the University of Halle, and in 1789 became a Privat-Docent. In 1794 he was ordained and preached successively at Landsberg and Berlin. The literary and philosophical side of his intellect developed itself in sympathy with the Romanticists, but he never lost his passion for religion, a subject on which he published five discurses in 1799. We find in them a trace of the pantheism of Spinoza. His translation of Plato, accomplished between 1804 and 1806, gave him high rank as a classical scholar. In 1817 he joined the movement toward the union of the Lutheran and Reformed churches. As a preacher he was unprepossessing in appearance, being sickly and hunchbacked, but his simplicity of manner, and his clear, earnest style endeared him to many thousands. He died in Berlin in 1834.

SCHLEIERMACHER

1768—1834

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AN IMAGE OF OUR NEW LIFE

As Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life.—Romans vi., 4.

It is natural, my friends, that the glorious festival of our Savior's resurrection should attract the thoughts of believers to a far remote time, and that it should make them rejoice to think of the time when they shall be with Him who, after He had risen from the dead, returned to His and our Father. But the apostle, in the words of our text, recalls us from what is far off to what is close to us—to the immediate present of our life here. He takes hold of what is the most immediate concern, of what we are at once to share in and which is to form us, even here, into the likeness of Christ's resurrection. We are buried with Him, He says, unto death, that as He was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we also might walk in newness of life. And this new life is that which, as the Lord Himself says, all who believe in Him possess

even now as having passed through death to life. The apostle compares this with those glorious days of our Lord's resurrection; and how could we more appropriately keep this feast—a feast in which, above all others, many Christians draw renewed strength for this new life from the most intimate union with our heavenly Head—how could we better celebrate it than by endeavoring to receive this directly for ourselves from the words of the apostle? Let us then, according to the teaching of these words, consider the resurrection life of our Lord, as the apostle presents it to us, as a glorious, tho it may be unattainable, model of the new life in which we are all to walk through Him.

1. This new life is like that of our risen Savior, first, in the manner of His resurrection. In order to appear to His disciples in that glorified form, which already bore in it the indications of the eternal and immortal glory, it was necessary that the Savior should pass through the pains of death. It was not an easy transformation; it was necessary for Him, tho not to see corruption, yet to have the shadow of death pass over Him; and friends and enemies vied with each other in trying to retain Him in the power of the grave; the friends rolling a stone before it, to keep the beloved corpse in safety, the enemies setting a watch lest it should be taken away. But when the hour came which the

Father had reserved in His own power, the angel of the Lord appeared and rolled away the stone from the tomb, and the watch fled, and at the summons of omnipotence life came back into the dead form.

Thus, my friends, we know what is the new life that is to be like the resurrection life of the Lord. A previous life must die; the apostle calls it the body of sin, the law of sin in our members, and this needs no lengthened discussion. We all know and feel that this life, which Scripture calls a being dead in sins, pleasant and splendid as may be the form it often assumes, is yet nothing but what the mortal body of the Savior also was, an expression and evidence of the power of death, because even the fairest and strongest presentation of this kind lacks the element of being imperishable. Thus with the mortal body of the Savior, and thus also with the natural life of man, which is as yet not a life from God.

And this our old man must die a violent death in the name of the law, such as the Savior died, not without severe suffering and painful wounds. For if the body of sin dies out in a man of itself, through satiety of earthly things, and because no excitement can any longer affect his exhausted powers, that is a death from which we see no new life proceed. The power of sin must be slain in a man by violence; a man must go through the

torture of self-knowledge, showing him the contrast between his wretched condition and the higher life to which he is called; he must hear the cry, and accept it as an irrevocable sentence; that an end is to be put to this life; he must groan and almost sink under the preparations for the execution of that sentence; all his accustomed habits of life must cease; he must be conscious of the wish that he were safely through it all, and it were at an end.

And when he has yielded up the old life to a welcome death, and the old man is crucified with Christ, then the world, which knows nothing better than that previous life, if it only goes on well and easily, uses all kinds of efforts to hinder the rising up of the new life, some of them well-meaning, others self-interested and therefore hostile. Some, with good intentions, like those friends of the Savior, consult together, and try all in their power, keeping away all extraneous influences, to preserve at least the appearance of their friend from being defaced, and tho no joyful movement can ever again be awakened, to preserve the form of the old life. Others, seeking their own interest and pleasure in a way by which they almost certainly accuse themselves, try to prevent an abuse being practised in this state of things, and also to guard against the gay, merry life which they lead, and into which they like so much to lead

others, being brought into contempt by a question of a new life arising after this dying off of the old man, when, as they think, there is really nothing else and nothing better here on earth and when it is a vain pretense for some to assert that they know this new life, and a mischievous delusion for others to attempt attaining it. Therefore wherever they perceive such a state of things, they have their spies to watch against every deception that might be practised about such a new life, or at least at once to discover and publish what kind of delusions prevail in connection with it.

But when the hour has come which the Father has kept in His own power, then in one form or another His life-bringing angel appears to such a soul. Yet how little do we know about what part the angel had in the Savior's resurrection! We do not know if the Savior saw him or not; we can not determine the moment at which he rolled away the stone from the tomb and the reanimated Savior came forth; no one witnessed it, and the only persons of whom we are told that they might have been able to see it with their bodily eyes were smitten with blindness. And in like manner, neither do we know how the soul, lying, so to speak, in the tomb of self-destruction, is wrought upon by the angel of the Lord in order to call forth the life of God in it. It arises unseen in that grave-like silence, and can not be perceived until it is

actually present; what is properly the beginning of it is hidden, as every beginning usually is, even from him to whom the life is imparted. But this is certain, as the apostle says, that the Lord was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and thus also, according to the words of the Savior, no man comes to the Son except the Father draw him; that same glory of the Father, which then called forth the Savior from the tomb, still awakens in the soul that has died to sin the new life, like the resurrection life of the Lord. Indeed, among all the proofs of the Father's glory in heaven and earth, there is none greater than this, that he has no pleasure in the death-like condition of the sinner, but that at some time or another the almighty, mysterious, life-giving call sounds in his ears —Arise and live.

2. And, secondly, this new life resembles its type and ideal, the resurrection life of Christ, not only in being risen from death, but also in its whole nature, way and manner. First, in this respect, that tho a new life, it is, nevertheless, the life of the same man, and in the closest connection with his former life. Thus, with our Savior; He was the same, and was recognized by His disciples as the same, to their great joy; His whole appearance was the very same; even in the glory of His resurrection He bore the marks of His wounds as a remembrance of His sufferings and as the

tokens of His death; and the remembrance of His former state was most closely and constantly present with Him. And just so it is with the new life of the Spirit. If the old man has died in sin, and we now live in Christ, and with Him in God, yet we are the same persons that we were before. As the resurrection of the Lord was no new creation, but the same man, Jesus, who had gone down into the grave, come forth again from it; so in the soul before it died the death which leads to life in God, there must have lain the capability of receiving that life when the body of sin should die and perish; and that life is developed in the same human soul amid the same outward circumstances as before, and with its other powers and faculties remaining unchanged. We are entirely the same persons, only that the fire of the higher life is kindled in us, and also that we all bear the signs of death, and that the remembrance of our former state is present with us. Yes, in manifold ways we are often reminded of what we were and what we did before the call to new life sounded in our hearts; and it is not so easy to efface the scars of the wounds, and the numberless traces of the pains under which the old man had to die that the new man might live. And as the glad faith of the disciples rested on the very fact that they recognized the Lord as being, in the glory of His resurrection, the same person that He

was before; so also in us, the confidence in this new life, as a permanent and now natural state with us, rests only on this—that we recognize ourselves in it as the same persons that we were before; that there are the same faculties, lower and higher, of the human soul, which formerly served sin, but are now created anew as instruments of righteousness. Indeed, all the traces of that death, as well as of the former life, make us more vividly conscious of the great change that the life-giving call of God has produced in us, and call for the most heartfelt gratitude.

And as the Savior was the same person in the days of His resurrection, so His life was also again of course a vigorous and active life; indeed, we might almost say it bore the traces of humanity, without which it could be no image of our new life, even in this, that it gradually grew stronger and acquired new powers. When the Savior first appeared to Mary, He said, as if His new life had been, as it were, timid and sensitive, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my God and your God." But after a few days He showed Himself to Thomas, and bade him boldly touch Him, put his hand in the Master's side, and his fingers into the marks left by the nails of the cross, so that He did not shrink from being touched even on the most sensitive spots. And also even in the earliest days, and as if the new life were to be fully strengthened by

doing so, we find Him walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and from Emmaus back to Jerusalem, as well as going before His disciples into Galilee, and leading them back to Jerusalem, where He then ascended to heaven in their sight. And as He thus walked among them, living a life with them, human in every part, and exercising a human influence on them; so also His most important business was to talk with them of the kingdom of God, to reprove and rouse them up from their slowness of heart, and to open the eyes of their minds. Now so it is, my friends, with our new life—that is like the resurrection life of the Lord. Oh, how very gradually it gains its faculties in us, grows and becomes strong, only bearing still more than the new life of the Lord the traces of earthly imperfection. I can appeal on this point to the feeling of us all, for assuredly it is the same in all. How intermittent at first are the manifestations of this new life, and how limited the sphere of its action! How long does it retain its sensitive spots, which can not be touched without pain, or even without injurious consequences, and those are always the places in which the old man has been most deeply wounded in his dying hours! But in proportion as it becomes stronger, this new life ought the less to give the impression of being a mere fantom life, —the impression the Lord's disciples had when in the first moments they thought in

their fear that they saw a spirit, so that He was obliged to appeal to the testimony of all their senses, that they might perceive He was no spirit, but had flesh and bones. And thus if our new life in God consisted in mere states of feeling and emotions, which were not in the least capable of passing into action, or perhaps did not even aim at doing so; which were too peculiar and special to ourselves to be actually communicated to others or to move them with good effect, but rather might touch them with a chill sense of awe; what would such a life be but a ghost-like apparition that would no doubt excite attention, but would find no credence, and would make men uneasy in their accustomed course, but without producing any improvement in it? No, it is a life of action, and ought to be ever becoming more so; not only being nourished and growing stronger and stronger through the word of the Lord and through heart-communion with Him, to which He calls us, giving Himself to us as the meat and drink of eternal life, but every one striving to make his new life intelligible to others about him, and to influence them by it. Oh, that we had our eyes more and more steadily fixt on the risen Savior! Oh, that we could ever be learning more and more from Him to breathe out blessing, as He did when He imparted His Spirit to the disciples! Oh, that we were more and more learning like Him to en-

courage the foolish and slow of heart to joyful faith in the divine promises, to active obedience to the divine will of their Lord and Master, to the glad enjoyment and use of all the heavenly treasures that He has thrown open to us! Oh, that we were ever speaking more effectively to all connected with us, of the kingdom of God and of our inheritance in it, so that they might see why it was necessary for Christ to suffer, but also into what glory He has gone! These are our desires, and they are not vain desires. The life-giving Spirit, whom He has obtained for us, effects all this in each in the measure that pleases Him; and if once the life of God is kindled in the human soul if we have once, as the apostle says, become like Him in His resurrection, then His powers are also more and more abundantly and gloriously manifested in us through the efficacy of His Spirit for the common good.

But along with all this activity and strength, the life of the risen Savior was yet, in another sense, a secluded and hidden life. It is probable that when, in order to show Himself to His disciples, He went here and there from one part of the land to another, He was seen by many besides them, who had known Him in His previous life. How could it be otherwise? But the eyes of men were holden, that they did not recognize Him; and He made Himself known only to

those who belonged to Him in faithful love. At the same time, however, He said to them, Blest are they who do not see, yet believe! And what was the little number of those who were counted worthy of seeing Him, even if we add to them the five hundred whom Paul mentions, compared with the number of those who afterward believed in their testimony to the Lord's resurrection? And thus it is also, my friends, with the new life in which we walk, even if it is, as it ought to be, strong and vigorous, and ever at work for the kingdom of God; yet it is at the same time an unknown and hidden life, unrecognized by and hidden from the world, whose eyes are holden; and he who should set himself to force the knowledge of it upon them, who should hit upon extraordinary proceedings in order to attract their attention to the difference between the life of sin and the resurrection life, would not be walking in the likeness of the Lord's resurrection. As the people in the time of Christ had opportunity enough to inquire about His resurrection, in seeing how His disciples continued to hold together, so our neighbors also see our close alliance, which has nothing to do with the affairs of this world; and if they, because of this, inquire about what unites us, the answer will not be lacking to them. But our inner history we will as little thrust upon them as the risen Christ thrust His presence

on those who had slain Him, and who had therefore no desire to see Him. Instead of this, as He showed Himself only to His own, we also will make known our inner life only to those who are just in the same way our own; who, glowing with the same love, and cheered by the same faith, can tell us in return how the Lord has revealed Himself to them. Not by any means as if we followed some mysterious course, and that those only whose experiences had been entirely alike should separate themselves into little exclusive groups; for even the days of the Lord's resurrection present examples of various kinds of experience, and of one common inner fellowship connected with them all. And not only so, but even those who as yet have experienced nothing at all are not sent empty away. Only they must first become aware, by what they see without our thrusting it upon them, that here a spirit is breathing to which they are strangers, that here is manifested a life as yet unknown to them. Then will we, as was done then, lead them by the word of our testimony to the foundation of this new life; and as, when the word of preaching pierced men's hearts, when to some of them the old man began to appear as he really is, and they felt the first pangs that precede the death of the sinful man, there also sprang up faith in the resurrection of Him whom they had themselves crucified; so

will it always be with the knowledge of the new life proceeding from Him who has risen. Therefore let us have no anxiety; the circle of those who recognize this life will always be widening, just because they are beginning to share in it. And as soon as even the slightest premonition of it arises in a man's soul, as soon as he has come only so far as to be no longer pleased and satisfied with the perishing and evil things of the world, as soon as his soul absorbs even the first ray of heavenly light, then his eyes are opened, so that he recognizes this life, and becomes aware what a different life it is to serve righteousness, from living in the service of sin.

3. And lastly, my friends, we can not feel all these comforting and glorious things in which our new life resembles the resurrection life of our Lord, without being at the same time, on another side, moved to sorrow by this resemblance. For if we put together all that the evangelists and apostles of the Lord have preserved for us about His resurrection life, we still can not out of it all form an entirely consecutive history. There are separate moments and hours, separate conversations and actions, and then the Risen One vanishes again from the eyes that look for Him; in vain we ask where He can have tarried, we must wait till He appears again. Not that in Himself there was anything of this broken or uncertain life, but as to our

view of it, it is and can not be but so; and we try in vain to penetrate into the intervals between those detached moments and hours. Well, and is it not, to our sorrow, with the new life that is like Christ's resurrection life? I do not mean that this life is limited to the few hours of social worship and prayer, glorious and profitable as they are; for in that case there would be cause to fear that it was a mere pretense; nor to the services, always but small and desultory, that each of us, actively working through the gifts of the Spirit, accomplishes, as it were, visibly and tangibly according to his measure, for the kingdom of God. In manifold ways besides these we become conscious of this new life; there are many quieter and secret moments in which it is strongly felt, tho only deep in our inmost heart. But notwithstanding this, I think all, without exception, must confess that we are by no means conscious of this new life as an entirely continuous state; on the contrary, each of us loses sight of it only too often, not only among friends, among disturbances and cares, but amid the commendable occupations of this world. But this experience, my dear friends, humbling as it is, ought not to make us unbelieving, as if perhaps our consciousness of being a new creature in Christ were a delusion, and what we had regarded as indications of this life were only morbid and overstrained emotions.

As the Lord convinced His disciples that He had flesh and bones, so we may all convince ourselves and each other that this is an actual life; but in that case we must believe that, tho in a hidden way and not always present to our consciousness, yet it is always in existence, just as the Lord was still in existence even at the times when He did not appear to His disciples; and had neither returned to the grave, nor as yet ascended to heaven. Only let us not overlook this difference. In the case of Christ we do not apprehend it as a natural and necessary thing that during those forty days He led a life apparently so interrupted; but each of us must easily understand how, as the influence of this new life on our outward ways can only gradually become perceptible, it should often and for a long time be quite hidden from us, especially when we are very busy with outward work, and our attention is taken up with it. But this is an imperfection from which as time goes on we should be always becoming more free. Therefore always go back, my friends, to Him who is the only fountain of this spiritual life! If, ever and anon, we can not find it in ourselves, we always find it in Him, and it is always pouring forth afresh from Him the Head to us His members. If every moment in which we do not perceive it is a moment of longing, as soon as we become conscious of the void, then it

is also a moment in which the Risen One appears to our spirit, and breathes on us anew with His life-giving power. And thus drawing only from Him, we shall attain to having His heavenly gifts becoming in us more and more an inexhaustible, continually flowing fountain of spiritual and eternal life. For this He rose from the dead by the glory of the Father, that we should be made into the likeness of His resurrection. That was finished in His return to the Father; our new life is to become more and more His and the Fathers return into the depths of our souls; there they desire to make their abode; and the life of God is to be ever assuming a more continuous, active and powerful form in us, that our life in the service of righteousness may become, and continue even here, according to the Lord's promise, an eternal life.

MASON

MESSIAH'S THRONE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Mitchell Mason, the eminent divine of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, was born in New York City in 1770. He completed his studies and took his degree at Columbia College and thence proceeded to take a theological course at Edinburgh. Ordained in 1793, he took charge of the Cedar Street Church, New York City, of which his father had been pastor. In 1807 he became editor of the *Christian Herald,* and in 1821 was made president of Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He died in 1829.

MASON

1770—1829

MESSIAH'S THRONE

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.—Heb. i., 18.

In the all-important argument which occupies this epistle, Paul assumes, what the believing Hebrews had already professed, that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah. To prepare them for the consequences of their own principle—a principle involving nothing less than the abolition of their law, the subversion of their state, the ruin of their city, the final extinction of their carnal hopes—he leads them to the doctrine of their Redeemer's person, in order to explain the nature of his offices, to evince the value of his spiritual salvation, and to show, in both, the accomplishment of their economy which was now "ready to vanish away." Under no apprehension of betraying the unwary into idolatrous homage by giving to the Lord Jesus greater glory than is due unto His name, the apostle sets out with ascribing to Him excellence and attributes which belong to no creature. Creatures of most elevated rank are introduced; but it is to display, by contrast, the preeminence of Him who is "the

brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person." Angels are great in might and in dignity; but "unto them hath he not put in subjection the world to come. Unto which of them said he, at any time, Thou art my son?" To which of them, "Sit thou at my right hand." He saith they are spirits, "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. But unto the Son," in a style which annihilates competition and comparison—"unto the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

Brethren, if the majesty of Jesus is the subject which the Holy Ghost selected for the encouragement and consolation of His people, when He was shaking the earth and the heavens, and diffusing His gospel among the nations, can it be otherwise than suitable and precious to us on this occasion? Shall it not expand our views, and warm our hearts, and nerve our arm in our efforts to exalt His fame? Let me implore, then, the aid of your prayers, but far more importunately the aids of His own Spirit, while I speak of the things which concern the King: those great things contained in the text—His personal glory—His sovereign rule.

His personal glory shines forth in the name by which He is revealed; a name above every name: "Thy throne, O God." . . .

Messiah's throne is not one of those airy

fabrics which are reared by vanity and overthrown by time: it is fixt of old; it is staple, and can not be shaken, for it is the throne of God. He who sitteth on it is the Omnipotent. Universal being is in His hand. Revolution, force, fear, as applied to His kingdom, are words without meaning. Rise up in rebellion, if thou hast courage. Associate with thee the whole mass of infernal power. Begin with the ruin of whatever is fair and good in this little globe. Pass hence to pluck the sun out of his place, and roll the volume of desolation through the starry world. What hast thou done unto Him? It is the puny menace of a worm against Him whose frown is perdition. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh."

With the stability which Messiah's Godhead communicates to His throne, let us connect the stability resulting from His Father's covenant.

His throne is founded not merely in strength, but in right. God hath laid the government upon the shoulder of His holy child Jesus, and set Him upon Mount Zion as His King forever. He has promised and sworn to build up His throne to all generations; to make it endure as the days of heaven; to beat down His foes before His face, and plague them that hate Him. "But my faithfulness," adds He, "and my mercy shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be

exalted. Hath he said it, and will he not do it? Hath he spoken it, and shall it not come to pass?'' Whatever disappointments rebuke the visionary projects of men, or the more crafty schemes of Satan, ''the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.'' The blood of sprinkling, which sealed all the promises made to Messiah, and binds down His Father's faithfulness to their accomplishment, witnesses continually in the heavenly sanctuary. ''He must,'' therefore, ''reign till he have put all his enemies under his feet.'' And altho the dispensation of His authority shall, upon this event, be changed, and He shall deliver it up, in its present form, to the Father, He shall still remain, in His substantial glory, a priest upon His throne, to be the eternal bond of our union, and the eternal medium of our fellowship with the living God.

Seeing that the throne of our King is as immovable as it is exalted, let us with joy draw water out of that well of salvation which is opened to us in the administration of His kingdom. Here we must consider its general characters, and the means by which it operates.

The general characters which I shall illustrate are the following:

1. Mystery. He is the unsearchable God, and His government must be like Himself. Facts concerning both He has graciously revealed. These we must admit upon the credit

of His own testimony; with these we must satisfy our wishes and limit our inquiry. To intrude into those things which he hath not seen because God has not disclosed them, whether they relate to His arrangements for this world or the next, is the arrogance of one vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. There are secrets in our Lord's procedure which He will not explain to us in this life, and which may not perhaps be explained in the life to come. We can not tell how He makes evil the minister of good; how He combines physical and moral agencies of different kind and order, in the production of blessings. We can not so much as conjecture what bearings the system of redemption, in every part of its process, may have upon the relations of providence in the occurrences of this moment, or of the last. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us: it is high, we can not attain it. Our Sovereign's way is in the sea, and His path in the deep waters; and His footsteps are not known. When, therefore, we are surrounded with difficulty, when we can not unriddle His conduct in particular dispensations, we must remember that He is God—that we are to "walk by faith"; and to trust Him as implicitly when we are in the valley of the shadow of death, as when His candle shines upon our heads. We must remember that it is not for us to be admitted into the cabinet of the King of kings; that creatures consti-

tuted as we are could not sustain the view of His unveiled agency; that it would confound, and scatter, and annihilate our little intellects. As often, then, as He retires from our observation, blending goodness with majesty, let us lay our hands upon our mouths and worship. This stateliness of our King can afford us no just ground of uneasiness. On the contrary, it contributes to our tranquillity.

2. For we know that if His administration is mysterious, it is also wise. "Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite." That infinite understanding watches over, and arranges, and directs all the affairs of His Church and of the world. We are perplexed at every step, embarrassed by opposition, lost in confusion, fretted by disappointment, and ready to conclude, in our haste, that all things are against our own good and our Master's honor. But "this is our infirmity"; it is the dictate of impatience and indiscretion. We forget the "years of the right hand of the Most High." We are slow of heart in learning a lesson which shall soothe our spirits at the expense of our pride. We turn away from the consolation to be derived from believing that tho we know not the connections and results of holy providence, our Lord Jesus knows them perfectly. With Him there is no irregularity, no chance, no conjecture. Disposed before His eye in the most luminous

and exquisite order, the whole series of events occupy the very place and crisis where they are most effectually to subserve the purposes of His love. Not a moment of time is wasted, nor a fragment of action misapplied. What He does, we do not indeed know at present, but, as far as we shall be permitted to know hereafter, we shall see that his most inscrutable procedure was guided by consummate wisdom; that our choice was often as foolish as our petulance was provoking; that the success of our own wishes would have been our most painful chastisement, would have diminished our happiness, and detracted from His praise. Let us study, therefore, brethren, to subject our ignorance to His knowledge; instead of prescribing, to obey; instead of questioning, to believe: to perform our part without that despondency which betrays a fear that our Lord may neglect His, and tacitly accuses Him of a less concern than we feel for the glory of His own name. Let us not shrink from this duty as imposing too rigorous a condition upon our obedience.

3. A third character of Messiah's administration is righteousness. "The scepter of his kingdom is a right scepter." If "clouds and darkness are around about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." In the times of old, His redeemed "wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; but, nevertheless, he led them forth by

the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation." He loves His Church and the members of it too tenderly to lay upon them any burdens, or expose them to any trials, which are not indispensable to their good. It is right for them to go through fire and through water, that He may bring them out into a healthy place—right to endure chastening, that they may be partakers of His holiness—right to have the sentence of death in themselves, that they may trust in the living God, and that His strength may be perfect in their weakness. It is right that He should endure with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; that He should permit iniquity to abound, the love of many to wax cold, and the dangers of His Church to accumulate, till the interposition of His arm be necessary and decisive. In the day of final retribution, not one mouth shall be opened to complain of injustice. It will be seen that the Judge of all the earth has done right; that the works of His hands have been verity and judgment, and done, every one of them, in truth and uprightness. Let us then think not only respectfully but reverently of His dispensations, repress the voice of murmur, and rebuke the spirit of discontent; wait, in faith and patience, till He become His own interpreter, when "the heavens shall declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory."

You will anticipate me in enumerating the means which Messiah employs in the administration of His kingdom:

1. The gospel, of which Himself, as an all-sufficient and condescending Savior, is the great and affecting theme. Derided by the world, it is, nevertheless, effectual to the salvation of them who believe. "We preach Christ crucified: to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The doctrine of the cross connected with evangelical ordinances—the ministry of reconciliation; the holy Sabbath; the sacraments of His covenant: briefly, the whole system of instituted worship—is the rod of the Redeemer's strength, by which He subdues sinners to Himself, rules even in the midst of His enemies, exercises His glorious authority in His Church, and exhibits a visible proof to men and angels that He is King in Zion.

2. The efficient means to which the gospel owes its success, and the name of Jesus its praise, is the agency of the Holy Ghost.

Christianity is the ministration of the spirit. All real and sanctifying knowledge of the truth and love of God is from His inspiration. It was the last and best promise which the Savior made to His afflicted disciples at the moment of parting, "I will send the

Comforter, the Spirit of Truth; he shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." It is He who convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: who infuses resistless vigor into means otherwise weak and useless. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, God the Spirit, to the pulling down of strongholds. Without His benediction, the ministry of an archangel would never convert one sinner from the error of his way. But when He descends with His life-giving influence from God out of heaven, then "foolish things of the world confound the wise; and weak things of the world confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, bring to naught things which are." It is this ministration of the Spirit which renders the preaching of the gospel to men dead in trespasses and sins a reasonable service. When I am set down in the valley of vision, and view the bones, very many and very dry, and am desired to try the effects of my own ability in recalling them to life, I will fold my hands and stand mute in astonishment and despair. But when the Lord God commands me to speak in His name, my closed lips shall be opened; when He calls upon the breath from the four winds to breathe upon the slain that they may live, I will prophesy without

fear, "Oh, ye dry bones, hear the words of the Lord"; and, obedient to His voice, they shall come together, bone to His bone—shall be covered with sinews and flesh—shall receive new life, and stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. In this manner, from the graves of nature, and the dry bones of natural men, does the Holy Spirit recruit the "armies of the living God," and make them, collectively and individually, a name, and a praise, and a glory to the Captain of their salvation.

3. Among the instruments which the Lord Jesus employs in the administration of His government, are the resources of the physical and moral world.

Supreme in heaven and in earth, "upholding all things by the word of his power," the universe is His magazine of means. Nothing which acts or exists, is exempted from promoting in its own place the purposes of His kingdom. Beings rational and irrational, animate and inanimate; the heavens above, and the earth below; the obedience of sanctified, and the disobedience of unsanctified men; all holy spirits; all damned spirits; in one word, every agency, every element, every atom, are but the ministers of His will, and concur in the execution of His designs. And this He will demonstrate to the confusion of His enemies, and the joy of His people, in that great and terrible day when He shall

sit upon the throne of His glory, and dispense ultimate judgment to the quick and the dead.

Upon these hills of holiness the stability of Messiah's throne, and the perfect administration of His kingdom, let us take our station, and survey the prospects which rise up before the Church of God.

When I look upon the magnificent scene, I can not repress the salutation, "Hail, thou that art highly favored!" She has the prospect of preservation, of increase and of triumph.

The long existence of the Christian Church would be pronounced, upon common principles of reasoning, impossible. She finds in every man a natural and inveterate enemy. To encounter and overcome the unanimous hostility of the world, she boasts no political stratagem, no disciplined legions, no outward coercion of any kind. Yet her expectation is, that she shall live forever. To mock this hope and blot out her memorial from under heaven, the most furious efforts of fanaticism, the most ingenious arts of statesmen, the concentrated strength of empires, have been frequently and perseveringly applied. The blood of her sons and her daughters has streamed like water; the smoke of the scaffold and the stake, where they won the crown of martyrdom in the cause of Jesus, has ascended in thick volumes to the skies. The tribes of persecutors have sported over her woes and

erected monuments, as they imagined, of her perpetual ruin. But where are her tyrants, and where their empires? The tyrants have long since gone to their own place; their names have descended upon the roll of infamy; their empires have passed, like shadows over the rock—they have successively disappeared, and left not a trace behind.

But what became of the Church? She rose from her ashes fresh in beauty and in might. Celestial glory beamed around her; she dashed down the monumental marble of her foes, and they who hated her fled before her. She has celebrated the funeral of kings and kingdoms that plotted her destruction; and, with the inscriptions of their pride, has transmitted to posterity the record of their shame. How shall this phenomenon be explained? We are, at the present moment, witnesses of the fact; but who can unfold the mystery? This blest book, the book of truth and life, has made our wonder to cease. The Lord her God in the midst of her is mighty. His presence is a fountain of health, and his protection a wall of fire. He has betrothed her, in eternal covenant, to Himself. Her living head, in whom she lives, is above, and His quickening Spirit shall never depart from her. Armed with divine virtue, His gospel, secret, silent, unobserved, enters the hearts of men and sets up an everlasting kingdom. It eludes all the vigilance, and baffles all the power of the

adversary. Bars and bolts, and dungeons are no obstacle to its approach. Bonds, and tortures, and death can not extinguish its influence. Let no man's heart tremble, then, because of fear. Let no man despair, in these days of rebuke and blasphemy, of the Christian cause. The ark is launched, indeed, upon the floods; the tempest sweeps along the deep; the billows break over her on every side. But Jehovah-Jesus has promised to conduct her in safety to the haven of peace. She can not be lost unless the Pilot perish. Why, then, do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? Hear, O Zion, the word of thy God, and rejoice for the consolation. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

Mere preservation, however, tho a most comfortable, is not the only hope of the Church; she has the prospect of increase.

Increase—from an effectual blessing upon the means of grace in places where they are already enjoyed; the Lord saith, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offering; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses."

Increase—from the diffusion of evangelical truth through pagan lands. "For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see and flow together, and thy heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

Increase—from the recovery of the rejected Jews to the faith and privileges of God's dear children. Blindness in part has happened unto Israel; they have been cut off, for their unbelief, from the olive-tree. Age has followed age, and they remain to this hour spread over the face of the earth, a fearful and affecting testimony to the truth of God's word. They are without their sanctuary, without their Messiah, without the hope of their believing ancestors. But it shall not be always thus. They are still "beloved for the father's sake." When the "fulness of the Gentiles shall come in," they too shall be gathered. They shall discover, in our Jesus, the marks of the promised Messiah; and with

tenderness proportioned to their former insensibility, shall cling to His cross. Grafted again into their own olive-tree, all Israel shall be saved. It was through their fall that salvation came unto us Gentiles. And "if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" What ecstasy, my brethren! the Gentile and the Jew taking sweet counsel together, and going to the house of God in company; the path of the swift messenger of grace marked in every direction by the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ—a nation born at once—the children of Zion exclaiming, "The place is too strait for me: give place to me, that I may dwell"; the knowledge of Jehovah overspreading the earth as the waters cover the sea; and all flesh enjoying the salvation of God.

This faith ushers in a third prospect of the Church—the prospect of triumph.

Tho often desolate and afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted, the Lord her God will then make her "an eternal excellency," and repay her sorrows with triumph.

Triumph—in complete victory over the enemies who sought her hurt. "The nation and kingdom," saith the Lord, "that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow

themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel." That great enemy of her purity and her peace, who shed the blood of her saints and her prophets, the man of sin, "who has exalted himself above all that is called God," shall appear in the whole horror of his doom as the "son of perdition, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." . . .

Such, according to the sure word of prophecy, will be the triumphs of Christianity; and to this issue all Scriptural efforts to evangelize the heathen contribute their share. That mind is profane, indeed, which repels the sentiment of awe; and hard is the heart which feels no bland emotion. But let us pause. You exult, perhaps, in the view of that happiness which is reserved for the human race; you long for its arrival, and are eager, in your place, to help on the gracious work. It is well. But are there no heathen among us? Are there none who, in the midst of their zeal for foreign missions, forget their own souls; nor consider that they themselves neglect the great salvation? Remember, that a man may be active in measures which shall subserve the conversion of others, and yet perish in his own iniquity. That very gospel which you desire to send to the heathen, must be the gospel of your salvation: it must turn you

from darkness to light, from the power of satan unto God; it must make you meet for the inheritance of the saints, or it shall fearfully aggravate your condemnation at last. You pray, "Thy kingdom come." But is the "kingdom of God within you?" Is the Lord Jesus "in you the hope of glory?" Be not deceived. The name of Christian will not save you. Better had it been for you not to have known the way of righteousness; better to have been the most idolatrous pagan; better, infinitely better, not to have been born, than to die strangers to the pardon of the Redeemer's blood and the sanctifying virtue of His Spirit. From His throne on high He calls—calls to you, "Look unto me, and be ye saved; for I am God, and there is none else. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

On the other hand, such as have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them, are commanded to be joyful in their King. He reigns, O believer, for thee. The stability of His throne is thy safety. The administration of His government is for thy good; and the precious pledge is, that He "will perfect that which concerneth thee." In all thy

troubles, and in all thy joy, commit thy way unto Him. He will guard the sacred deposit. Fear not that thou shalt lack any good thing. Fear not that thou shalt be forsaken. Fear not that thou shalt fall beneath the arm of the oppressor. "He went through the fires of the pit to save thee." Sing, then, thou beloved, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."

And if we have "tasted that he is gracious"; if we look back with horror and transport upon the wretchedness and the wrath which we have escaped, with what anxiety shall we not hasten to the aid of our fellow men, who are sitting in "the region and shadow of death." What zeal will be too ardent, what labor too persevering, what sacrifice too costly, if, by any means, we may tell them of Jesus, and the resurrection, and the life eternal? Who shall be daunted by difficulties, or deterred by discouragement? If but one pagan shall be brought, savingly, by your instrumentality, to the knowledge of God and the kingdom of heaven, will you not have an ample recompense? Is there here a man who would give up all for lost because some favorite hope has been disappointed, or who regrets the wordly substance which he has expended on so divine an enterprise? Shame on thy coward spirit and thine avaricious

heart! Do the holy Scriptures, does the experience of ages, does the nature of things justify the expectation that we shall carry war into the central regions of delusion and crime, without opposition, without trial? Show me a plan which encounters not fierce resistance from the prince of darkness and his allies in the human heart, and I will show you a plan which never came from the inspiration of God. If missionary effort suffer occasional embarrassment; if impressions on the heathen be less speedy, and powerful, and extensive than fond wishes have anticipated; if particular parts of the great system of operation be, at times, disconcerted; if any of the ministers of grace fall a sacrifice to the violence of those whom they go to bless in the name of the Lord—these are events which ought to exercise our faith and patience, to wean us from self-sufficiency, to teach where our strength lies, and where our dependence must be fixt; but not to enfeeble hope nor relax diligence. Let us not "despise the day of small things." Let us not overlook, as an important matter, the very existence of that missionary spirit which has already awakened Christians in different countries from their long and dishonorable slumbers, and bids fair to produce, in due season, a general movement of the Church upon earth. Let us not, for one instant, harbor the ungracious thought that the prayers, and tears, and wrestlings of

those who make mention of the Lord, form no link in that vast chain of events by which He "will establish, and will make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." That dispensation which is most repulsive to flesh and blood, the violent death of faithful missionaries, should animate Christians with new resolution. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." The cry of martyred blood ascends the heavens: it enters into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. It will give Him no rest till He rain down righteousness upon the land where it has been shed, and which it has sealed as a future conquest for Him who "in his majesty rides prosperously because of truth, and meekness and righteousness."

For the world, indeed, and perhaps for the Church, many calamities and trials are in store, before the glory of the Lord shall be so revealed that all flesh shall see it together. "I will shake all nations," is the divine declaration—"I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come." The vials of wrath which are now running, and others which remain to be poured out, must be exhausted. The "supper of the great God" must be prepared, and his "strange work" have its course. Yet the missionary cause must ultimately succeed. It is the cause of God and shall prevail. The days, O brethren, roll rapidly on, when the shout of the isles shall swell the thunder of the continent; when

the Thames and the Danube, when the Tiber and the Rhine, shall call upon Euphrates, the Ganges, and the Nile; and the loud concert shall be joined by the Hudson, the Mississippi, and the Amazon, singing with one heart and one voice, "Alleluia, salvation! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

Comfort one another with this faith and with these words.

Now, "Blest be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things. And blest be his glorious name forever: Let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen."

END OF VOL. III.